In the Name of Allah,
the All– beneficent, the All– merciful

قال الله تعالى:

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾

Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification.

(*Surat al- Ahzab* 33:33).

Prophetic traditions mentioned in both in Sunni and Shi'ah authoritative reference books of *hadith* and*tafsir* (exegesis of the Qur'an) have confirmed that this holy verse was revealed to exclusively refer to the People of the Cloak [*ahl al- kisa'*], viz. Muhammad, 'Ali, Fațimah, al-Ḥasan, and al- Ḥusayn ('a) as the *Ahl al-Bayt* (People of the Household). For instance, refer to the following references: *Sunni:* Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), al-*Musnad*, 1:231; 4:107; 6:292, 304; *Sahih Muslim* (d. 261 AH), 7:130; Al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH), *Sunan*, 5:361 et al.; Al-Dulabi (d. 310 AH), Al-*Dhuriyyah al-Ṭahirah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 108; Al- Nasa'i (d. 303 AH), Al- *Sunan al-Kubra*, 5:108; 113; Al-Ḥakim al- Nayshaburi (d. 405 AH), Al-*Mustadrak 'alas–Sahihayn*, 2:416, 3:133, 146– 147; Al-Zarkashi (d. 794 AH), Al-*Burhan*, p. 197; Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852 AH), *Fath al-Bari SharhSahih al-Bukhari*, 7:104.

Shi'ah: Al- Kulayni (d. 328 AH), *Usul al-Kafi*, 1:287; Ibn Babawayh (d. 329 AH), Al-*Imamah wa t–Tabsirah*, p. 47, *hadith* 29; Al- Maghribi (d. 363 AH), *Da'a'im al-Islam*, pp. 35, 37; Al-Saduq (d. 381 AH), Al-*Khisal*, pp. 403, 550; Al- Ṭusi (d. 460 AH), Al- *Amali*, *hadith* 438, 482, 783.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse recorded in the following books of *tafsir*: Al- Jassas (d. 370 AH), *Ahkam al-Qur'an*; Al-Wahidi (d. 468 AH), *Asbab al-Nuzul*; Ibn al- Jawzi (d. 597 AH), *Zad al-Masir*; Al- Qurțubi (d. 671 AH), Al- *Jami' Li–Ahkam al-Qur'an*; Ibn Kathir (d. 774 AH), *Tafsir*; Al- Tha'labi (d. 825 AH), *Tafsir*; Al-Ṭabari (d. 875 AH), *Tafsir*; Al- Suyuți (d. 911 AH), Al-*Durr al-Manthur*; Al-Shawkani (d. 1250 AH), *Fath al- Qadir*; Al-'Ayyashi (d. 320 AH), *Tafsir*; Al-Qummi (d. 329 AH), *Tafsir*; Furat al-Kufi (d. 352 AH), *Tafsir* at the margin of the exegesis of *Surat al- Nisa'* verse 59; Al- Ṭabarsi (d. 560 AH), *Majma' al- Bayan*, as well as many other sources.

THE LIFE OF IMAM AL–RIDA (AS)

قال رسول الله ﷺ:

"إني تاركُ فيكُمُ الثَقلين:

كتاب الله، وعترتي أهلَ بيتي، ما إن تمسكتُم بهما لن تضلوا أبداً وأَنَّهُما لَن يَفترِقا حتّى يردا عَليَّ الحوضَ"

The Messenger of Allah (s) said: "Verily, I am leaving among you two precious things [thaqalayn]: The Book of Allah and my progeny ['itrati], the members of my Household [Ahl al- Bayt]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [hawḍ] (of Kawthar)."

Some references:
Al-Ḥakim an-Nayshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'ala's-Sahihayn (Beirut), vol. 3, pp. 109-110, 148, 533
Muslim, As-Sahih, (English translation), book 31, hadiths 5920-3.
At-Tirmidhi, As-Sahih, vol. 5, pp. 621–2, hadiths 3786, 3788; vol. 2, p. 219.
An-Nasa'i, Khasa'is 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭalib, hadith 79.
Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, Al- Musnad, vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26; vol. 3, pp. 26, 59; vol. 4, p. 371; vol. 5, pp. 181–182, 189-190.
Ibn al-'Athir, Jami' al-Usul, vol. 1, p. 277.
Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidayah wa'n-Nihayah, vol. 5, p. 209.
Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al- Qur'an al- 'Aẓim, vol. 6, p. 199.
Nasir ad-Din al- Albani, Silsilat al- Ahadith as-Sahihah (Kuwait: Ad-Dar as-Salafiyyah), vol. 4, pp. 355-358.

THE LIFE OF IMAM AL–RIDA (AS)

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CONTENTS

PREFACE—11

INTRODUCTION—13

SECTION ONE

CHAPTER ONE IMAM AL–RIDA (AS) IN A GLIMPSE—27

CHAPTER TWO IMPRESSIONS OF IMAM AL–RIDA'S (AS) PERSONALITY—29

CHAPTER THREE A DESCRIPTION OF IMAM AL–RIDA'S (AS) PERSONALITY—34

His Renunciation of Worldly Pleasures—36

His Munificence—37

Entertaining Guests—39

Releasing Slaves—39

Kindness to Slaves—40

Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) Knowledge—40

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and the Knowledge of all Languages—41

His Prophecies—42

His Acts of Worship and Reverential Fear—46

Imam's (‘a) Supplications—49

SECTION TWO

CHAPTER ONE IMAM AL–RIDA'S (AS) UPBRINGING—53

CHAPTER TWO THE STAGES OF IMAM AL–RIDA'S (AS) LIFE—57

CHAPTER THREE IMAM AL–RIDA (AS) UNDER THE WING OF HIS FATHER—59

1. Intellectual and religious deviations—59

2. Ethical and economic corruption—59

3. Political corruption—60

4. Muslims' Respect for the Household (‘a)—60

5. Famous Revolts—61

Imam Kadhim (‘a) providing a Basis for Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) Imamah—62

Imam Kadhim‘s (‘a) Will regarding the Next Imam (‘a)—64

His Will during the First Stages (150–178 AH)—66

Imam’s (‘a)Testament when He was in Prison—69

Announcement of Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) Imamah at the Appropriate time—71

SECTION THREE

CHAPTER ONE IMAM AL–RIDA (AS) AND HIS FATHER'S DIFFICULTIES—75

A Relatively Improvement of the Political Conditions during the Time of Harun—78

The Imamah—80

CHAPTER TWO DEVIATIONS IN THE TIME OF IMAM AL–RIDA (‘a)—83

Intellectual Deviations—83

The Caliphs and Wastefulness of the Treasury—89

Ethical Perversion—91

Political Perversion—95

1.The Political Situation in Harun's Time—95

2. The Political Conditions in the Time of Muhammad(al-Ameen)—101

CHAPTER THREE IMAM AL–RIDA’S (AS) ROLE BEFORE HIS SUCCESSION TO THE CROWN—103

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and the Intellectual and Religious Reforms—103

1. Constructively Responding to Intellectual Deviation—104

2. Spreading the Correct Ideas—108

3. Referring to the scholars—110

Economic Reformation—110

Ethical Reform—114

1. Following the Prophet of Allah (s)—114

2. Imam Al-Rida (‘a), a Great Model—116

3. Calling towards Respectful Behaviour—118

4. Creation of Righteous Group—121

Political Reformation—123

1. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and Divine Leadership—123

2. Imam’s (‘a) Political Role in al-Harun and al-Ameen's Time—130

SECTION FOUR

CHAPTER ONE IMAM AL–RIDA (AS) AND REGENCY—139

The Political Events Occurring before Regency—139

Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) Political Positioning—142

Al-Ma'mun's Motive behind the Imam's (‘a) Succession to the Crown—144

1. Reducing Tension within the Society—145
2. Legalizing his Government—146
3. Preventing Imam Al-Rida (‘a) from Calling the People to himself—147
4. Isolating the Imam (‘a) from his Companions—148
5. Immunity of his government—148
6. To Defame the Imam (‘a)—149
7. Crushing the Frontline of the Opponent—149

The Reasons behind Accepting the Imam's (‘a) Succession to the Crown—150

Imam's (‘a) Benefiting from Opportunities—153

1. Practising religion and the revival of tradition—153
2. Preparation of forces—154
3. Foiling Al-Ma'mun's plans—154
4. Correction of incorrect political thought—154

The Way of pledging Allegiance—155

Some extractions from Al-Ma'mun's textual document—157

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) also wrote on the other side of textual document—157

Al-Ma'mun's orders after he pledged his allegiance to Imam Al-Rida (‘a)—158

The events after allegiance was sworn to the Imam (‘a)—159

The Benefits of Accepting Succession to the Throne—161

1. Al-Ma'mun's Confession of the Legitimacy of the Household (‘a)—161
2. Using the Propagative Means in Favour of Imam Al-Rida (‘a)—163
3. Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) Open Discussion with the Followers of Other Religions—164
4. Propagation of the Household's (‘a) Teachings and Virtues—166
5. Saving the Lives of the Household (‘a)—170

CHAPTER TWO IMAM AL–RIDA'S (AS) ACTIVITIES AFTER SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE—171

Thwarting Al-Ma'mun's Plans—171

Judicial Rectifications—172

Administrative Rectifications—174

Preaching Fair Thoughts in Court—175

Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) Advice to Al-Ma'mun—177

Protecting the Entity of Islam—178

Miracle, a means of reformation—180

Encouragement of revolutionary poets—183
Imam Al-Rida's ('a) scientific activities—184
Imam Al-Rida ('a) and the Future—185
Imamah of Imam Al-Jawad ('a) in the Sayings of Imam Al- Rida ('a)—186
Making Ground for Imam Mahdi's ('a) Worldwide Government—190
The Sad End of Imam Al-Rida's ('a) Life—194
Imam Al-Rida's ('a) Martyrdom—196
The Causative Factors that led Al-Ma'mun to decide to poison the Imam—198
The Prominence of Visiting Imam Al-Rida ('a)—201

CHAPTER THREE THE SCHOOL, DIALOGUES AND THE INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE OF IMAM AL–RIDA (AS)—202

1. Imam Al-Rida's ('a) School—203
2. Imam Al-Rida's ('a) Dialogues—207
   1. Discussion with the Dualist Polytheists—209
   2. Discussion with People of Different Religions—209
   3. His Dialogue with Ali ibn al-Jahm—239
   4. His Dialogue with the Head of Catholics—243
   5. Discussion with Muslim scholars—244
   6. The Imam ('a) debates with Al-Ma'mun—261
   7. The Imam Debates with Islamic theologians—262
   8. Imam Debates with Yahyah ibn Zahhak Samarqandi—267
   9. The Imam ('a) debates with Sulaiman al-Marwazi—268
   10. The Imam's ('a) discussion with Islamic Jurisprudents—288
3. The heritage of Imam al-Rida—288
   Tibb al-Imam al-Rida (Medicine of Imam al-Rida)—289
   Musnad al-Imam al-Rida (The Uninterruptedly Transmitted Traditions of Imam al-Rida ('a)—289
   Jawami' al-Shari'ah (Collectionsof the Religious Laws)—290
   Fiqh al-Imam al-Rida (Jurisprudence of Imam al-Rida)—290
   Intelligence, Knowledge, and Education—292
   The Holy Qur'an—293
   Monotheism—294
   Prophethood and the Prophets—296
   The Imamah and the Holy Imams—297
   Ghadìr Day—302
   Imam al-Rida ('a) and Jurisprudence—304
   Maxims of Imam al-Rida ('a)—305

BIBLIOGRAPHY—309

PREFACE

In the Name of Allah, the All–beneficent, the All–merciful

The invaluable legacy of the Household [Ahl Al-Bayt] of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all), as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has provided the Muslim ummah with many scholars whom, following in the footsteps of Imams of the Prophet's Household (‘a), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well– reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions anddoubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) has embarked on a defense of the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) and the disciples of their school of thought in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the Ahl Al-Bayt (‘a) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship and appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to healthy minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Shi‘ah writers and those who have embraced this sublime school of

thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in editing and publishing valuable works by leading Shi'ah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the School of the Prophet's Household ('a) has offered to the entire world.

The Ahl Al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly looks forward to benefit from the opinions of the readers and their suggestions and constructive criticism in this area.

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Prophet Muhammad (S).

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imam Al-Mahdi, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to authoring group, the author of the present book, andthe Islamic foundation, London its translator. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation Office. ✍

Cultural Affairs Department
Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly

INTRODUCTION

In the Name of Allah, the All–beneficent, the All–merciful

In the Name of Allah and all praise to Him, He who gave everything its nature, then guided it aright. All peace and blessings be upon those whom He has chosen to be the guides of His creatures, especially the Seal of the Prophets and the Chief of the elite Messengers, the divinely chosen Prophet Abu'l–Qasim Muhammad, and the members of his Household, the blessed and well–selected ones.

As Allah the Almighty created man, He furnished him with the two elements of intellect and volition. By intellect, man can perceive things in order to detect the truth and distinguish it from falsehood. By volition, man can choose what is good for him in order to achieve his goals and purposes.

Allah the Almighty then decided intellect to be an argument against His creatures and helped them make use of their intellects through many aspects of His guidance. It is thus Allah Who taught man what he had not known, [1] showed him the way that takes him to his most proper perfection, [2] appraised him of the goal of his creation, [3] and caused him to exist in this world for the purpose of achieving this goal.

Through clear–cut texts, the Wise Qur'an clarified the signs, horizons, requirements, and ways to the divine guidance. It also demonstrated the causes and effects of this guidance and revealed its fruits and outcomes. In this way, the Holy Qur'an has provided us with a perfect view of divinity and its methods.[4]

---

1. *Surat Al-'Alaq, 96:5.*
2. *Surat Al-Fatehah, 1:6-7.*
3. *Surat Al-Najm, 53: 42, and 51: 56.*
4. *Surat Al-Fatehah, 67:2.*

In many of the texts of the Holy Qur'an, Allah the Almighty has revealed the reality, principles, characteristics, ways, epitomes, and outcomes of divine guidance. Some of these texts are as follows:

﴿ قُلۡ إِنَّ هُدَى ٱللَّهِ هُوَ ٱلۡهُدَىٰ ﴾

"... Say: Verily, the guidance of Allah, that is the (true) guidance."[1]

﴿ وَٱللَّهُ يَهۡدِى مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسۡتَقِيمٍ ﴾

"... For Allah guides whom He will to a path that is straight."[2]

﴿ وَٱللَّهُ يَقُولُ ٱلۡحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهۡدِى ٱلسَّبِيلَ ﴾

"... But Allah tells (you) the truth, and He shows the (right) way."[3]

﴿ وَمَن يَعۡتَصِم بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدۡ هُدِىَ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسۡتَقِيمٍ ﴾

"... Whoever holds firmly to Allah will be shown that which is straight."[4]

﴿ قُلِ ٱللَّهُ يَهۡدِى لِلۡحَقِّۗ أَفَمَن يَهۡدِىٓ إِلَى ٱلۡحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَن يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّن لَّا يَهِدِّىٓ إِلَّآ أَن يُهۡدَىٰۖ فَمَا لَكُمۡ كَيۡفَ تَحۡكُمُونَ ﴾

"... Say thou: Allah alone guides towards the Truth. Is then He more worthy to be followed, or he who finds not guidance (himself) unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you? How judge ye?"[5]

﴿وَيَرَى ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلۡعِلۡمَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ هُوَ ٱلۡحَقَّ وَيَهۡدِىٓ إِلَىٰ

1. *Surat Al-An'am, 6:71.*
2. *Surat Al-Baqarah, 2:213.*
3. *Surat Al-Ahzab, 33:4.*
4. *Surat Al-'Imran, 3:101.*
5. *Surat Yunus, 10:35.*

صِرَاطِ ٱلْعَزِيزِ ٱلْحَمِيدِ ﴾

"And those to whom knowledge has come see that the (Revelation) sent down to thee from thy lord is the truth, and that it guides to the path of the Exalted (in Might), Worthy of all praise."[1]

﴿ وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ ٱتَّبَعَ هَوَىٰهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴾

"And who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts, devoid of guidance from Allah?"[2]

The source of true guidance is exclusively Allah the Almighty, Whose guidance must be the all–true guidance. It is thus Allah the Almighty Who holds man's hand and guides him to the straight path and the flawless truth. These facts are supported by science; therefore, knowledgeable people realize and submit to these facts from top to bottom.

Philosophy and Tools of Divine Guidance

Allah the Almighty has placed in human beings the instinct for perfection and seeking beauty. He then showed him grace by guiding him towards proper perfection and loaded him with the favour of identifying the way to perfection. The Almighty says:

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾

"I have created the jinn and mankind only that they may serve me."[3]

As true worship cannot be achieved without recognition, thus both recognition and worship have become the sole unique way, and the channel through which one reaches the peak of perfection.

---

1. *Surat Saba', 34:6.*
2. *Surat Al-Qisas, 28:50.*
3. *Surat Adh-Dhariyat, 51:56.*

As Allah the Almighty equipped man with the senses of anger and lust in order to supply him with the fuel of movement towards perfection, man became well qualified for having a hold over his anger as well as the other way round, i.e. that anger, lust and desires, resulting from these two instincts would be able to take control over him. As a result, man, aside from his intellect, enlightened knowledge, amongst other tools, is in need of what guarantees him perfect insight, genuine intuition, and the right course so that it would be possible for him to achieve perfection. Once all these tools are accessible for him, the Creator would easily question him as to why s/he failed to achieve perfection, since the Creator has provided him with absolute guidance, and all means to choose with full volition the way to happiness and goodness available to him; therefore, nothing coerces man to opt for the way towards evil and misery.

Based on the abovementioned explanation, we may grasp the philosophy behind supporting man's intellect, by means of divine revelation with easily understood dictations and trustworthy distinguished figures to follow. These persons are embodied by the guiding leaders, whom Allah the Almighty has chosen to undertake the duty of directing His servants to the right guidance. Thus, the Almighty has designated these persons as leaders of true guidance and made it possible for all human beings to recognize these leaders, whom the Almighty also provided with all directions required in all domains of life.

The prophets and their divinely guided successors have always carried the banner of divine guidance since the dawn of human history, continuing to carrying it throughout the ages of human civilization and the generations that followed.

The Almighty has never left His servants without appointing for them an illuminated, enlightened guide, and director. This fact is supported by clear–cut texts of the Divine Revelation. Some of these texts, which are supported by excellent reasoning, state that the earth will never be devoid of a person, representing conveying and defending the Divine arguments for the Almighty's creations:

"In order that mankind may have no excuse against Almighty Allah (swt)."

﴿لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ حُجَّةُۢ بَعۡدَ ٱلرُّسُلِۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا﴾[1]

Thus, a representative perfect divine figure existed before the creation and with the creation, and will endure to remain after the termination of the creation.[2] Moreover, even if only two beings remain alive on this globe, one of them must be appointed by the Almighty to be His Divine representation against the other. This fact has been undoubtedly stated by the Holy Qur'an that reads:

﴿ إِنَّمَآ أَنتَ مُنذِرٞۖ وَلِكُلِّ قَوۡمٍ هَادٍ﴾

"... Thou art a warner only, and for every man a guide."[3]

The prophets, messengers, and their guiding divinely appointed successors undertake the mission of guidance at all levels. This process of guidance can be summed up in a set of correlated and integral missions, which can be put in the following points:

1. They receive the divine revelation in a perfect way and assimilate the divine mission in the most accurate manner. This process of reception stands for their perfect readiness for receiving the divine mission. For this reason, the divine selection of the Messengers must be one of the affairs that are related to Allah the Almighty alone. Revealing this fact, the Holy Qur'an declares:

﴿ ٱللَّهُ أَعۡلَمُ حَيۡثُ يَجۡعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُۥ﴾

"Allah knoweth best with whom to place His Message."[4]

﴿ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَجۡتَبِي مِن رُّسُلِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ﴾

"But Allah chooseth of His messengers whom He will ..."[5]

---

1. *Surat Al-Nisa, 4:165.*
2. Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-Saffar, Basa'ir al-Darajat, pp. 507-8, H. 3. S. 11; al-Nu'mani, Kitab al-Ghaybah, p. 139, S. 9.
3. *Surat Ar-Ra'd, 13:7.*
4. *Surat Al-An'am, 6:124.*
5. *Surat Al 'Imran, 3:179.*

2. They convey the divine message to the people to whom they have been sent. The conveyance of the divine message is conditional upon the ideal competence of these Messengers, which is the result of their perfect comprehension and understanding of the divine message's details, goals, and requirements. Likewise, the Messengers' conveyance of the divine message is conditional upon their inerrancy, meaning they are too infallible to fall in mistakes, errors, and deviations. In reference to this point, Allah the Almighty states in the Holy Qur'an:

﴿كَانَ ٱلنَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنزَلَ مَعَهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ فِيمَا ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ﴾

"Men were one community. God sent messengers to give glad tidings to the good and warn the bad. He sent the book in truth so they might judge justly in their disputes ..."[1]

﴿قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ ٱلْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾﴾[2]

He said: "Then, by Thy might, I surely will beguile them every one, save Thy single–minded slaves among them.

One of the missions of the Messengers is to create a nation that believes in the divine message, also preparing the individuals of this nation to support the guiding leaders for the purpose of realizing and putting into effect the goals of the divine message. Using the two terms of *tazkiyah* (purification) and *ta'lim* (education), many Qur'anic verses have referred to these two terms, summarizing the mission.For instance, the Holy Qur'an reads:

﴿وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ﴾

"(He might) purify them from the filth of ignorance and evil

1. *Surat Al-Baqarah, 2:213.*
2. *Surat Saad, 38:82-83.*

characteristics and teach them the Law contained in His book."[1]

3. The Qur'anic term (*tazkiyah)* stands for the appropriate education toward perfection, which suits human nature. On the other hand, education requires the existence of a righteous archetype, possessing all elements of perfection. In this respect, Allah the Almighty says:

﴿ لَّقَدۡ كَانَ لَكُمۡ فِي رَسُولِ ٱللَّهِ أُسۡوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرۡجُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلۡيَوۡمَ ٱلۡأٓخِرَ وَذَكَرَ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرٗا ﴾

"Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him that looks unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much."[2]

4. The Messengers are also required to protect the divine message from deviation, divergence, and digression throughout the period, which is valid for it has been decided by the Almighty. Once again, this mission requires scientific and mental competence, matching with the requirements in implementing this great mission.

5. Another mission of the Messengers is to fulfil the spiritual goals of the divine message and implant the moral values in the mentalities of humans, by way of putting into action the divine program and applying the laws of the religion to the human community through the establishment of a political entity, assuming administration of the affairs of the community, in accordance to the divine message sent to them. Achievement of these goals requires the existence of a wise and excellently courageous leader who must enjoy great perseverance and full acquaintance with the psychologies of the people, their social classes, their different ideological, social, and political tendencies, as well as the laws of administration, education, and norms. These qualities can be summed up in two features; namely, competence and infallibility. The achievement of these goals requires a scientific and practical competent leader, one experienced in running the affairs of a

1. *Surat Al-Jumu'ah, 62:2.*
2. *Surat Al-Ahzab, 33:21.*

global and religious state. Infallibility, which is identical to mental competence, is also required for protecting the religious leadership against any aberrant behaviour or misdeed that could negatively affect the progress of the leadership and mislead the masses in a way that is incompatible with the goals and purposes of the divine message.

Throughout generations, the prophets and their divinely selected successors have boldly embarked upon the course of guidance despite difficulties, suffering unbearable agonies for the sake of educating the people, as required by God. They have thus undergone various plights in order to carry out their mission, sacrificing their most precious things for their principles and beliefs. They have not retreated for a moment nor have they ever dallied.

Allah the Almighty crowned the relentless efforts of all of the prophets and their successors throughout the generations with the message of the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah (s). The Almighty thus imposed on the Prophet Muhammad (s) the greatest responsibility of guidance with all of its ranks and ordered him to work on putting into practice the goals of the divine mission. The Holy Prophet (s) took this rugged course with amazing steps and in the shortest period, achieved the greatest effect in the history of revolutionary uprisings and divine messages. The outcome of his blessed efforts in a period of twenty years can be summed up as follows:

1. He provided for mankind a perfect program resplendent with all elements of perpetuity and endurance.
2. He supplied mankind with all factors that save from aberration and deviation.
3. He created a Muslim community that believes in Allah as the one and only Lord; Islam as the chief principle, Muhammad (s) as the leader, and the religious law as the formula of life.
4. He established a Muslim state and a political entity that carries the pennon of Islam and implements the laws of God.
5. He demonstrated the brilliant feature of divine leadership, represented by his wise leadership.

In order to completely bring to fruition the goals of the divine message, it was necessary that:

A. The competent leader continuously apply the message, and protect it from acrimonious individuals awaiting calamities.

B. The process of the sound education endured throughout generations at the hands of scientifically and mentally competent educators who, just like the Holy Prophet, represented the most excellent exemplars in both morality and behaviour, comprehending and embodying the divine message in all of their activities.

For this reason, it was mandatory upon the Holy Prophet, according to the divine plan, to prepare elite individuals from among the immaculate members of his household, for leadership after his departure. He thus referred to these individuals by name and expressed the roles that they should play.[1] This was in order for them to continue with the great march of prophethood and remain divinely guided by Allah the Almighty, to protect the divine message continued by the Almighty against the distortions of misleaders and plots of the traitors. They were responsible in raising the next generations on the values determined by Allah the Almighty and concepts of the blessed religious law. Therefore, these individuals undertook the mission of explicating the features of these laws, revealing their secrets to humanity, to continue until Allah inherits the earth and all His creations are returned to Him.

The divine plan can be seen in many of the words of the Holy Prophet, like his famous saying: "I am leaving amongst you the two weighty (i.e. precious) things with which you shall never go astray, as long as you hold fast to them: the Book of Allah and the members of my

1. See the *Suratal-Ma'idah*, 5:67/3. This holy verse reveals the divine command of designating to the next leadership of the Muslim community the person whose leadership would complete the divine message and who would fulfil the divine mission so that the sealing divine religion would be flawlessly perfect. Through the leadership of this divinely chosen person, God's grace of guidance that He conferred upon humanity would be perfect in all of its ranks and thus the all-comprehensive and perfect religion of Islam would be the everlasting religion approved for all human beings.

household. They shall never separate from one another until they both join me at the Divine Pond."[1]

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (i.e. the Holy Prophet's household) have always been the best example of leadership and the real representatives of the divine plan. On many occasions, the Holy Prophet introduced them, by the command of the Almighty, as his successors, who should assume the leadership of the Muslim community after him. The behaviour of these twelve Imams represented actual Islam and the best examples of the divine message in the times that followed that of the Holy Prophet's era.

In view of this fact, it is necessary to study their lives in detail and as comprehensively as possible, because their behaviour and approach to life brought to light an all–inclusive portrait of the Holy Prophet's movement of the propagation for Islam, forcing its way deep in the community, despite the breach that occurred following the passing of the Holy Prophet. Yet, the Infallible Imams, although experiencing multiple attempts of elimination and dismissal from the political and social scene of the Muslim community, worked inexorably to awaken the masses, directing them towards the divine message through self application of the laws of the religion, representing the manners of the Holy Prophet, attracting all mankind to his blessed message and its goals, without deviating from the universal institutions that control the progress and development of all human societies.

The lifestyles and manners of the orthodox Imams embodied in the best way the principle of steadfastness in the Holy Prophet's conduct; therefore, the masses began to gradually follow them and take their path in spite of the obstacles that were deliberately placed in their way. Moreover, the masses looked upon them as epitomes of true guidance and lanterns that lit up the path for those who sought the way

1. See al-Saffar, Basa'ir al-Darajat, p. 433, H. 3; al-Maghribi, Da'a'im al-Islam 1:28; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Fada'il al-Sahabah, p. 15; Musnad Ahmad 3:14 and 17; al-Hakim al-Nayshaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn 3:148. Moreover, this prophetic saying has been recorded in the majority of the most reliable reference books of both Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims with differences in texts and through various ways of narration.

of truth and believed in their divinely ordained leadership. Thus, the Holy Imams have always been the guides chosen by Almighty Allah and pioneers in winning His approval. They were steadfast in carrying out His commands and loved Him greatly being eager to fulfil His will in defending the message of the Messenger of Islam, and other elevated and distinguished figures pursuing perfection.

Their lives were full of troubles and they were devoted in their obedience to Allah. They dealt with the antipathetic ones with such tolerance, that they provided the best examples of steadfastness and self–sacrifice, dedicated in establishing the practice of the laws of Allah the Almighty. They preferred martyrdom with dignity, as opposed to survival with humility; and in doing so they fulfilled Allah's (swt) will upon enduring great struggle, severe tests and unbearable sufferings.

No historian or man of letters can ever touch on all of the inspiring aspects of their lives –taking into consideration the attempts to eliminate their effective roles in the protection of true Islam– nor could anyone claim to study their lives as perfectly as required. Thus, in this encyclopaedia, we can only attempt to reveal a few features of their lives and present snapshots of their historically recorded ways. However, we have done our best to introduce to the readers an all–inclusive view of the lives of the Holy Imams, in the hope that the Almighty will reward us. Surely, He is the patron of every success.

Our fourteen–volume encyclopaedia of "Epitomes of True Guidance" examines the emissary movement of the Fourteen Infallibles, beginning with the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) and ending with the seal of the successors; Muhammad ibn al-Hassan al-'Askari, the awaited Imam, may Allah hasten his relief and light up the earth with the luminosity of his justice and the sheen of his equity.

The common features to studying the life of each of these Fourteen Infallibles is to emphasize their individual and social emissary activities, reveal the social features and demands of their eras, and introduce the feats that were achieved under their leadership and some samples of their sayings.

As the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly (ABWA) undertook the task of publishing and introducing this encyclopaedia, abiding by

presenting it in the most proper form, it has become a role–model of scientific study, according to the associative methodology founded on the guidance of the Holy Qur'an and the most reliable reference books of historiography, which are indeed a splendid scientific treasury although people have neglected the majority of these reference books due to the premeditated plots that were hatched against the message of Islam and its blessed leaders. In the current age of wakefulness, it seems important for humanity in general and Muslims in particular to be acquainted with many hidden facts, although these facts are too bitter to accept and too shocking to believe. However, it seems appropriate to introduce these facts according to the Qur'anic method of propagation for Islam and "*enjoining truth and enjoining patience*."

The current book is dedicated to studying the life of Imam *'Ali ibn Musa al-Rida ('a)*; the eighth of the Twelfth Imams, and the tenth in the list of the Fourteen Infallibles, the epitomes of true guidance during the age of the sealing divine message. Imam *'Aliibn Musaal–Rida ('a)*left the human society, in particular the Muslim generations, a huge heritage in order for humanity to gain illumination from it and attain glory by applying its manners, if they only comprehend it.

The (ABWA) team is pleased to express gratitude to the group of authors of this book, the Islamic Ahl al-Bayt ('a) Foundation, London its translator and editor. Finally, we, the (ABWA) Team, pray that the Almighty grant them all success and an excellent reward. Verily, He is the patron of success and reward.

Cultural Affairs Department,
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SECTION ONE

Chapter One
Imam Al-Rida (‘a) in a Glimpse

Chapter Two
Impressions of Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) Personality

Chapter Three
A Description of Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a)Personality

CHAPTER ONE
IMAM AL–RIDA (AS) IN A GLIMPSE

Imam Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) is the eighth Imam from the Household of the Prophet (s) from whom Allah the Exalted removed uncleanliness and purified from deviations; a family which was associated with the holy Qur'an by the Prophet (s) saying that whosoever cleaves to them will never go astray; a family which was a Noah's ark, saving those embarking and allowing those who did not to drown. The great Imam (‘a) whose birth had already been pronounced by the Prophet of God (s) was born after the martyrdom of his great grandfather Imam Sadiq (‘a) at the time of Mansur. He was born into the noblest and most respected family of Quraish, the family of Imamah and martyrdom which was of course the Hashimi and Alawi family, and was brought up in the care of his father Imam Kadhim (‘a). He passed more than three decades of his life under the protection of his father. He was a contemporary of four caliphs namely Mansur, Mahdi, Hadi and Rashid; those caliphs who tried their best to remove and kill the Imams (‘a) and extinguish the light of this glorious family forever.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) appeared as the brightest political personality of Islamic history in his own era. He was very constant and explicit regarding his political position. He was never drawn into dualistic action by even the most cunning caliph such as Harun al-Rashid. Imam (‘a) knew very well that Al-Ma’mun's offer of acceptance of caliphate and then the post of crown prince was no more than a trap; Al-Ma’mundidthis at a time when the Alawi revolts and movements were shaking the foundations of his government and rule.

Al-Ma’mun’s motives, based on political self–interest, regarding the offer of succession to the crown made to the Imam (‘a) were not hidden from him (‘a), neither was he unaware of the necessities of his age and the conditions in which he was living. Therefore, Imam (‘a) destroyed Al-Ma’mun’s golden opportunity, which consisted of

offering him (‘a) the post of succession to the crown. Rather, the Imam (‘a) used this offer for the preaching of Islam and raising awareness among the people about its meaning; also, he benefited from this opportunity to consolidate the foundations of programs of the Household (‘a) and fought against false intellectual and religious beliefs and thoughts which were becoming very common in those days.

Al-Ma’mun was facing great trouble from two things, the first of which was the presence of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) in the centre of his rule, while the second one was the increased positive feelings of the people towards the people of the holy Household (‘a). Al-Ma’mun could think of nothing else to allow himself to be rid of this great peril which he was facing because of the mentioned above two problems, but to martyr the Imam (‘a). He came to know about the peril only when Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had strengthened the pillars of Muhammadan Islam and ensured its propagation. He had trained generations of great scholars at his university, the number of whom exceeded three hundred. They were going through a very difficult time and were suppressed by the tyranny of the Abbasid caliphs. However, they kept guiding the people in the darkest nights of knowledge with the candles of knowledge in their hands. When we look at “Musnad of Imam Al-Rida (‘a)” and consider the writings available today, the following points become clear:

1.The wide range of scientific activities of the Imam (‘a);

2.The importance of the Imam’s (‘a) university;

3.The Imam’s (‘a) methodological innovations for the means of achieving the goals of the Ahl al-Bayt University; for achieving the peak of the revolutionary movement of the people of the Household (‘a) who were seeking it in the field of knowledge as well as politics.

Peace and blessings be on him, on the day in which he was born, on the day in which he was martyred and on the day in which he will come again.

CHAPTER TWO
IMPRESSIONS OF IMAM AL–RIDA'S (AS) PERSONALITY

Imam Abu Muhammad Al-Rida (‘a) is famous for his outstanding merits and talents. He has dominated the minds of religious scholars throughout generations and centuries, and they have lauded him regarding his glory and character. The following are some of these expressions of his glory:

Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (‘a) narrated that he said to his sons: "This is your brother Ali ibn Musa, who is the scholar of the Household of Muhammad (s). Question him about your beliefs and memorize what he says to you, for I heard my father Ja'far say: ‘The scholar of the Household of Muhammad (s) is in your loins. Would that I had met him, for he is the namesake of (Imam Ali) (‘a), the commander of the faithful."[1]

Al-Ma'mun, the 'Abbasid King, who was one of the enemies of the Imam (‘a), announced the excellence and exalted position of Imam Al-Rida (‘a), on several occasions:

1.He said to Fadlbin Sahl and his brother: "I do not know anyone more meritorious (afdal) than this man (i.e. Ali ibn Musa) on the face of the earth."[2]

2.He praised Imam Al-Rida (‘a) in the letter which he sent to the 'Abbasids who were displeased with him when he intended to entrust the office of caliphate to the Imam (‘a). The letter says: "I did not pledge allegiance to him (i.e. Imam Al-Rida) (‘a) but discerning of him, knowing that none on the face of earth is clearer than him in merit, more manifest than him in chastity, more pious than him in

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1. **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:64-65; **Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim**, 2:164.
2. Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:261; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:73; **Maqatil al-Talibin**, p. 375, **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:1005.

piety, more ascetic than him in renouncing the world, freer than him in the soul, more pleasing than him to the special associates and the general populace, and firmer than him in Divine essence. The pledge of allegiance to him is confirmed by the good pleasure of the Lord."[1]

These words specify some of the exalted qualities which were in the Imam (‘a) and which distinguished him from the rest of the people.

Abu al-Salt, ‘Abd al-Salam al-Harawi, who was among the great figures of his time, said: "I have never seen anyone more learned than Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a). When a (religious) scholar sees him, he bears witness for him just as I do. Al-Ma’mun gathered for him a number of religious scholars, jurists of Islamic law and theologians. However, he (Al-Rida -as-) exceeded them to the extent that they acknowledged his excellence over them."[2]

The leader of the Shi'ah, Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Nu'man al-'Ukkburi al-Baghdadi, better known as al-Shaykh al-Mufid, said: "The Imam who undertook (the office) after Abu al-Hassan Musa ibn Ja’far (‘a) was his son, Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a), because of his merit over all his brothers and the members of his Household because of the knowledge, forbearance and pity which he showed, and which both the Shi'ah and the non–Shi'ah recognised and agreed upon."[3]

Jamal al-Din Ahmad ibn Ali, a genealogist better known as ibn Anba, said: "Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was given the kunya of Abu al-Hasan. None of al-Talibbiin (the descendants of Abu Talib) of his time was like him. Al-Ma’mun pledged allegiance to him, minted dirhams and dinars in his name and ordered his name to be mentioned in the pulpits."[4]

Jamal al-Din Abu al-Mahasin Yousif ibn Taghri said: "Imam Abu al-

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1. Ibn Tawus, **al-Tara'if**, p. 279.
2. **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:64; Al-Irbali, **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:110 and 111.
3. Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:247; Al-Irbali, **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:63.
4. **‘Amdat al-Talib fi Ansab Al Abi-Talib**, p. 198.

Hassan al-Hashimi, al-'Alawi, al-Husayni (‘a) was a learned Imam. He was the chief of the Hashimites of his time and was the greatest of them. Al-Ma’mun magnified him, honoured him, yielded to him and praised him, to the extent that he appointed him his successor.”[1]

Ibn Maja, like his other contemporaries, praised Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and said: “He (Imam Al-Rida) (‘a) was the chief of the Hashimites. Al-Ma’mun magnified and honoured him. He designated him as his successor and took the pledge of allegiance to him (from the people).”[2]

Ibn Hajar said: “Al-Rida (‘a) was among the men of knowledge and merits; he had noble lineage.”[3]

Al-Yafi'ipraised Imam Al-Rida (‘a), saying: “The great, magnified Imam, the descendant of the noble Sayyids, Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a), was one of the twelve Imams (‘a), the doers of laudable deeds; the Imami Shi'ah have followed them and adopted their doctrine.”[4]

Another person who praised and acknowledged the outstanding merits of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) is Al-Dhahabi who is well–known for showing enmity toward the Household (‘a). He said: “He (Imam Al-Rida) (‘a) was Imam Abu al-Hassan ibn Musa Kadhim ibn Ja’far al-Sadiq ibn Muhammad al-Baqir ibn Ali Zain al-'Abidin ibn al-Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib al-Hashimi al-'Alawi (‘a). He was the master of the Hashimites of his time; he was the most clement and noblest of them. Al-Ma’mun honoured him, yielded to him, and magnified him to the extent that he appointed him his successor.”[5]

Shabrawi praised Imam Al-Rida (‘a) saying: He – may Allah be pleased with him – was generous, magnified, venerable, and dignified. His father Abu Musa Kadhim (‘a) loved him very much.”[6]

Abu Nuaws, a famous poet, praised and lauded Imam Al-Rida (‘a). He

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1. **Al-Nujom al-Zahira fi Moulok Misr wa al-Qahira**, 2:174.
2. **kolasat Tahthib al-Kamal fi Asma al-Rijal**, p. 278.
3. **Tahthib al-Tahthib**, 7:340.
4. **Mirat al-Jinan**, 2:11.
5. **Tarikh al-Islam**, 8:270.
6. **Al-Ithaf bi hubb al-Ashraf**, p. 88.

composed poetry concerning him. However, when the Imam (‘a) was pronounced the successor to the crown by Al-Ma’mun, [1] Abu Nuaws stopped writing verses in praise of the Imam (‘a). The people criticized Abu Nuaws for this attitude. To answer their criticism he composed these wonderful lines of poetry:

“They say to me: You are the most unique of all people in the technique of famous statement. You have a style of essential words, which produces a pearl in the hands of he who holds it.

So why have you ceased to praise the qualities of Ibn Musa? I have said: I cannot find the right way to praise the Imam (‘a) whose father Gabriel served.”

Imam al-Rida (‘a) went out riding a mule. Abu Nuaws approached him, greeted him, and said to him: “O Son of Allah's Messenger, I have composed some lines of poetry concerning you. I wish you to hear them from me.”

“Recite them”, the Imam (‘a) commanded.

Abu Nuaws recited them, saying:

They (Ahl al-Bayt-as-) are purified, and their garments are pure. Blessings are rained down upon them whenever they are mentioned.

He who is not an 'Alawide when we ascribe him had no object of pride in bygone times. These people are the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) who have knowledge of the Book and that which the suras have mentioned.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) admired these lines and said to Abu` Nuaws: “You have brought us some poetry which none had composed before you.” Then the Imam (‘a) turned to his retainer and asked him: “How much money do you have?” “Three hundred dinars”, replied the retainer.” “Give them to Abu Nuaws”, the Imam commanded. When Abu Nuaws had gone home, the Imam (‘a) said to his retainer: “Perhaps Abu` Nuaws regards this money as insignificant, so send him the

1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:154; Ibn Toloon, **al-A'immah al-Ithnay‘ashar**, p. 98 and 99; Al-Irbali, **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:111.

mule."[1]

Finally we find De'bil Khuza'iwho abundantly lauded and elegized Imam Al-Rida (‘a). The following are some of his lines of poetry concerning him:

Ibn Musa(Al-Rida) (‘a) along with his exalted qualities has departed;

Noble knowledge has followed him;

Both guidance and religion have followed him, in the way of an intimate friend."[2]

1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:155;**Ithaf bi hubb al-Ashraf**, pp. 320-321; **Nuzhat al-Jalis**, 2. p. 105; **Kashf al-Ghumma**, 3:111; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:65; al-Safadi, **al-Wafi bi'l-Wafiyyat**, 22:155.
2. **Diwan De'bil**, p. 132.

CHAPTER THREE
A DESCRIPTION OF IMAM AL–RIDA'S (AS) PERSONALITY

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had many inner virtues and good morals. Allah the Exalted blessed him with great virtues like his father (‘a) and his forefathers (‘a) and blessed him with humility and magnification. He made him a pennant and great sign among His nation so that those erring without knowing the right path should resort to him and find their way. He enjoyed the good morals of his great–grandfather the Prophet (s) which he had inherited. Every single moment of his life was filled with these great virtues; the virtues which had given the Prophet of Allah (s) clear supremacy over all other Prophets (‘a) and with which he was able to change the lifestyle of human beings, lifting them from their ignorant beliefs. Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) mission was also to remove the newly–established ignorance from Islamic society, benefiting from the great morals of the Prophet (s) which were now in his possession.Ibrahim Bin Abbas says of the great morals of the Imam (‘a): "I never saw anyone like Abul Hassan Al-Rida (‘a), nor did I hear of anyone like him. I never found him to be verbally crude with anyone under any circumstances. I never saw him interrupt anyone. He always waited for them to finish talking. I never saw him refuse to fulfill anyone's needs that he was capable of fulfilling. He never stretched his legs out in front of anyone. He never leaned back in front of anyone. I never saw him reproach any of his servants or agents. I never saw him burst into loud laughter. Rather he would smile gently. When everyone left and they spread the tablecloth out for him to dine on, he called every one of his servants and agents. He slept very little during the nighttime. He stayed up a lot at night – from the beginning of the night till early morning. He fasted often. He often did good deeds and gave charity in secret. He did most of this in

the darkness of the night."[1]

Despite his succession to the crown, which is believed to be the most exalted office in the Islamic state, the Imam (‘a) did not order any of his supporters and retainers to attend to his many affairs; rather, he attended to them himself. Narrators have said: "When he was in need of taking a bath, he hated to order anyone to prepare the bath for him. He went to the public bath–house in the city. The owner of the bath–house never thought that the deputy (of Al-Ma'mun) would come to a public bath–house and wash in it; rather, he thought that kings would take a bath in their own houses. When the Imam (‘a) entered the bath–house, there was a soldier in it. The soldier ordered the Imam (‘a) to pour water on his head, and the Imam (‘a) did. Then a man who recognized the Imam (‘a) entered the bath–house and shouted at the soldier, saying: 'You have ruined yourself! Why have you ordered the son of the daughter of Allah's Messenger (s) to perform ablutions?" So the soldier felt extremely embarrassed; he kissed the Imam's (‘a) foot and apologized to him, saying: "O Son of Allah's Messenger (s), why did you obey me when I ordered you?" However, the Imam (‘a) smiled at him and said to him gently: "It is a reward. I did not want to disobey you because of that which I was rewarded."[2]

Another example of his exalted morals is that when he was ready to eat, he sat with his retainers, even the doorman and the groom. [2] In this manner he taught them that there was no colour discrimination among men, and that they were equal. Ibra`him ibn 'Abbas said: " I heard Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) saying[3]: 'I swear by emancipation, and by swearing this, I would emancipate one of my slaves till I emancipated each and every one of them, for I do not see myself as better than him (and he pointed to a black slave of his who was in his service) on account of my kinship to the Messenger of Allah (s), except if I do a good deed which would render me better."

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:184; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, vol 2:63; **Manaqib Al Abi-Talib**, 3:469-470. al-Safadi.
2. **Al-Wafi bi'l-Wafiyyat**, 22:156-157; **Noor al-Absar**, p. 138; **'Uyun al-Tawarikh**, 3:227.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:95 and 96; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:95 and 96 (taken from **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:95 and 96).

A man said to him: "By Allah, no person on the face of earth is nobler than you as your forefathers." He said: "Reverential fear made them noble and obedience to Allah preserved them."

Another person said to him: "By Allah, you are the most meritorious of the people."

The Imam ('a) answered him, saying: "Do not exaggerate; he who fears Allah and obeys Him is better than me. By Allah this verse has not been abrogated: 'O men! Surely we have created you of a male and female, and made you nations and tribes that you may know each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the most Allah–fearing of you; surely Allah is Knowing, Aware."[1]

His Renunciation of Worldly Pleasures

An example of the qualities of Imam Al-Rida ('a) is that he renounced the world and turned away from its pleasures and embellishments. Muhammad ibn Abbad tells us about the Imam's ('a) ascetic conduct, saying:[2] "Al-Rida ('a) used to sit on a leaf mat during the summer and on a straw sack during the winter; he used to put on coarse clothes, but when he went out to meet the public, he put on his very best.

Sufyan al-Thawri met the Imam ('a) and criticised him for wearing such clothes, saying: "I think that you had better wear cheaper clothes than this." However, the Imam ('a) took hold of his hand gently and put it into his sleeve; suddenly, there was coarse cloth under the silk one; and he said to him: 'Sufyan, the silk is for men and coarse clothes are for the truth (Allah)."[3]

When he became the heir apparent (of Al-Ma'mun), he paid no attention to any of the aspects of authority and magnification which men show toward their kings.

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1. *Surat al-Hujarat, 49: 13.*
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:261; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 93:224.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, vol, 2:192; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, vol 2:64; **Al-Manaqib**, 3:470.

His Munificence

There was nothing more appealing to the Imam (‘a) than doing kindness to men, and especially to the poor. Historians have mentioned numerous examples of his munificence. The following are some of them:

1.When the Imam (‘a) was in Khurasan on the Day of 'Arafa, he spent all that he had on the poor so al-Fadl ibn Sahl criticized him for this, saying: “Surely, this is a loss!”

“Rather it is a profit”, the Imam (‘a) answered. “You do no damage when you spend something as reward and generosity.” [1]

By saying this the Imam (‘a) wanted to make him understand that no damage is incurred when something is spent on the poor and the weak for Allah's good pleasure; rather, it is an act of loss when something is spent on unlawful deeds like those of kings and ministers who spend considerable amounts on singers and the mischievous.

2.A man came to the Imam (‘a), greeted him, and said to him: “I am one of those who love you and your fathers. I have returned from the hajj. My money is finished. I have nothing with me to reach a next stage, so I ask you to send me back to my homeland. When I arrive, I will give what you have given to me as alms to the poor on your behalf.” The Imam (‘a) said to the man: “Sit down, may Allah have mercy on you.” Then he turned to the people and spoke to them until they scattered. None stayed with him except Sulaiman al-Ja’fari and Herthama. The Imam (‘a) asked them for permission and entered the house. Then he came out, closed the door, and said: “Where is al-Khurasani?” AL–Khurasani stood up. The Imam (‘a) said to him: “Take these two hundred dinars, spend it on your need, and do not give it to the poor as alms on my behalf.” The man went away full of happiness because of the blessing the Imam (‘a) had bestowed on him. Then Sulaiman al-Ja’fari turned to the Imam (‘a) and asked him: “May I be your ransom, you gave the man a lot of money and had mercy on him, but why did you cover your face from him?”

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1. **Al-Manaqib**, 3:470.

He replied: “I did that lest I should see the abasement of begging on his face due to my doing this. Have you not heard the tradition of Allah's Messenger (s): 'He who secretly does a good deed is like he who performs the hajj seventy times; and he who openly performs an evil deed is abandoned.' Have you not heard the statement of the poet: 'When I some day come to him in order to seek my need, I return home without losing face.”[1]

3.Yet another example of his munificence is that he ordered the most delicious food to be put on a tray and to be given to the poor, and he recited this verse: “But he would not attempt the uphill road.” Then he said: “Allah knows that not everyone is able to emancipate a slave, so He has regarded munificence as a path leading to the Garden.”[2]

4. Another example of his munificence and generosity is when a poor man said to him: “Give me according to the extent of your kindness.” The Imam (‘a) answered him: “I cannot afford that.” The poor man realised his own mistake, so he said again: “Give me according to mine.” The Imam (‘a) smiled at him and said: “Yes, I will do this.” Then he ordered two hundred dinars to be given to the needy man.”[3]

5.Another example of his exalted acts of munificence is what has been narrated by Ahmad ibn 'Ubayd Allah on the authority of al-Ghifari, who said: “A man from the family of Abu` Ra'fi, the retainer of the Apostle of Allah (s), called so-and-so, had me in his debt. He demanded payment from me and insisted on my paying him. When I realized this, I prayed the Morning Prayer in the mosque of the Apostle of Allah (s) and I set out to see Al-Rida (‘a). On that day, he was in the valley of al-'Arid[4]. When I neared his door, he came out. He was wearing a shirt and a cloak (Al-Rida'). When I looked at him, I felt ashamed before him. When he reached me, he stood and looked at me. I greeted him. It was the month of Ramadan. I said: 'May I beyour

1. **Al-Kafi**, 4:23 and 24; **al-Manaqib Al Abi Talib**, 4:390; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:101, *hadith* no. 19.
2. **Barqi, al-Mahasin**, 2:392, *hadith* no. 20; **Al-Kafi**, 4:52.
3. **Manaqib Aal Abi Tabli**, 4:39; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:100 and 161.
4. Arid is a village about one mile from Madinah, refer to: the history of Qum, p. 224.

ransom, your retainer so-and-so has me in his debt. By Allah, he has spread reports of me around."

He told me to sit down until he came back. I was still there at the time when I prayed the sunset prayer. I had been fasting and I had become troubled and wanted to leave. Suddenly, he came. There was (a crowd of) people. "Beggars were begging from him and he was giving them alms. Then he retired from them and went into his house. He came out and called me. I rose and went in with him. He sat down and I sat down with him. I began to talk to him about the governor of Madinah. When I had finished, he said to me: 'I do not think that you have eaten yet?' 'Yes, ' I replied. "He called for food for me and it was put in front of me. He told the servant to eat with me. The servant and I had our fill of food. When we had finished, he said: 'Raise the cushion and take what is under it. "I raised it and there were (many) dinars. I took them and put them in my sleeve. He told some of his servants to accompany me to my house, and they did. I went to my house and called for a lamp. I examined the dinars and they were forty–eight dinars. I only owed the man twenty–eighty dinars. On a dinar of them it was engraved: 'The debt to the man is twenty–eighty dinars and the rest is yours."[1]

Entertaining Guests

The Imam ('a) entertained guests, bestowed liberally upon them, and he served them himself. The following story tells us how the Imam ('a) entertained his guests:

One day a person stopped and spoke to him at night. When the lamp flickered, the guest hurried to set it right, but the Imam ('a) went ahead of him and he himself set it right and said to his guest: "We are the people who do not employ their guests."[2]

Releasing Slaves

The most lovable thing to Imam Al-Rida ('a) was releasing slaves and

1. **Al-Kafi**, 1:486-488; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:255; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:97-98, *hadith* no. 12.
2. **Al-Kafi**, 6:283; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:102, *hadith* no. 20.

freeing them from slavery. The narrators tell us: “He (Imam Al-Rida (‘a) released one thousand slaves.”[1]

Kindness to Slaves

The Imam (‘a) displayed much kindness towards slaves. 'Abdullah ibn al-Salt reported on the authority of a man from the people of Balkh, who said: “I was with Imam Al-Rida (‘a) during his journey to Khurasan. One day he called for food and gathered his black and non–black retainers around it. Hence I asked him: 'May I be your ransom, could you please keep food aside for these (retainers)? As a result, he criticised me, saying: 'The Lord, the Blessed and Exalted, is One, the mother is one, and reward will be according to deeds.”[2]

Surely, it was not only Imam Al-Rida (‘a) who did this, but all the Imams (‘a) of the Household of the Prophet (s) behaving in such a manner in order to abolish colour discrimination among men and to show that they were in one mosque, and that nothing discriminates one person from another except reverential fear and good deeds.

Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) Knowledge

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) thoroughly encompassed all sciences and knowledge. The historians and the narrators have unanimously agreed that he was the most knowledgeable of the people of his time, the most meritorious and the most learned in the fields of religion and other sciences such as philosophy and medicine.

Talking about the Imam's abundant knowledge, 'Abd al-Salam al-Harawi said: “I have never seen a person more knowledgeable than Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a). When a religious scholar sees him, he bears witness for him (as being the most knowledgeable) as I do. Al-Ma’mun gathered for him in assemblies a number of religious scholars, jurists of Islamic law, and theologians. However, he overcame them to the extent that they acknowledged his excellence (over them) and confessed their feebleness before him. I heard him say: 'I used to take my place at the theological centre (rouda) and the

1. **Al-Ithaf bi hubb al-Ashraf**, p. 58.
2. **Al-Kafi**, 8:230; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:101, *hadith* 18.

number of learned scholars in Madinah was quite large. Yet when a question over–taxed the mind of one of those scholars, he and the rest would point at me, and they would send me their queries, and I would answer them all."[1]

The Imam (‘a) was the most learned of the people of his time and was the highest authority in the Islamic world; religious scholars and jurists would send him their questions about Islamic precepts.

Ibrahim ibn al-'Abbas said: "When Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was questioned about a certain thing, he answered it. I have never seen a person more knowledgeable than him. Al-Ma’mun examined him with questions about all things, and he answered them."[2]

Al-Ma’mun said of the Imam (‘a): "I think that there is no person on the face of the earth more learned than this man (i.e. Imam Al-Rida)."[3]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and the Knowledge of all Languages

Another example of his being the most knowledgeable person was that he could speak all languages. Abu` Isma'il al-Sindi reported: "When I was in India, I heard that Allah had an Arab proof, so I went out to seek him. I was guided to Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and I went to him. I could not speak Arabic. I greeted him in Sindi, and he greeted me in my own language. I asked him in Sindi, and he answered me in it. I said to him: 'I have heard that Allah has an Arab argument, and I have gone out to seek him. He said to me: 'It is I; ask (me) about whatever you desire.' I asked him my questions, and he answered them in my own language."[4]

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1. **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, vol 2:64; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:110-111; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:100.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:193; **al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:998; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, vol 2:63.
3. Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:261, **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, vol 2:73; **al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, vol 2:1005.
4. **Al-khara'ij wa al-jaraih**, 1:340, *hadith* no. 5; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:50, *hadith* no. 51. **Al-khara'ij wa al-Jaraih**, 1:340; al-Tusi, **al-Thaqib fi’l-Manaqib**, pp, 498; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:97; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:50-51.

A great number of people who met the Imam (‘a) also accepted his ability of being able to speak in any language. Abu Salt al-Hurawi said: “Imam Al-Rida (‘a) spoke to people in their own languages. I asked him about this (quality), and he replied: 'O Abu Salt, I am Allah's proof over His creatures. Allah does not appoint a proof over people who does not speak their own language. Have you not heard the words of the Commander of the Faithful: ‘We have been given sound judgment’? Is this not his knowledge of languages?’”[1]

Yasir al-Khadim (the retainer) narrated: “Abu` al-Hasan, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had in his house Byzantines and Slavs. He was close to them. He heard them speak in Slavic and Romanian, saying: 'We are visited in our homeland every year, but we are not visited here.” In the following morning he (Al-Rida) (‘a) sent someone to visit them.”[2]

His Prophecies

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) foretold many events before they happened like his father and forefathers (‘a) did, and they happened just as he had predicted. These prophecies clearly confirm the original faith of the Shi'ah who says that Allah, the Exalted, endowed the Imams of the Household of the Prophet (‘a) with excellence and inner knowledge, just as He had endowed His messengers. The following are some of the Imam's (‘a) prophecies:

1. Al-Hassan ibn Bashshar narrated on the authority of Imam Al-Rida (‘a), who said: “'Abdullah (i.e. Al-Ma’mun) will kill Muhammad (i.e. Amin).” I (al-Hassan ibn Bashshar) asked him: “Will 'Abdullah ibn Harun kill Muhammad ibn Harun?” “Yes”, he replied, “'Abdullah who is in Khurasan will kill Muhammad ibn Zubayda who is in Baghdad.”[3] Then he recited this poetry:

“Surely successive spites expose you and bring out the hidden

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1. **Al-manaqib**, 3:446; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, vol 2:70. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:251.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:250; **Al-manaqib**, 4:362; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:70.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:226; **Al-Manaqib**, 4:363; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:56; **Dalal al-Imamah**, p. 367.

malady.[1]

Some days ago and Al-Ma'mun killed his brother Amin.

2. Another example of the Imam's (‘a) inner knowledge is that when Muhammad "al-nafs al-zakiah" rose up in Makkah and summoned the people and broke the pledge of allegiance to Al-Ma'mun, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) went to him and said to him: "O uncle, do not accuse your father or your brother (i.e. Imam Kadhim (‘a) of lying, for this authority will not go well with you." However, Muhammad paid no attention to the Imam's (‘a) advice, and he announced his revolt against Al-Ma'mun. Shortly after that, the troops of al-Ma'mun headed by al-Jaludi attacked Muhammad and his fighters and defeated them. Then Muhammad asked al-Jaludi for security, and he gave it to him. He then went up on the pulpit and abdicated authority, saying: "This authority belongs to al-Ma'mun and I have no right in it."[2]

3. Hussain, the son of Imam Musa (‘a), said: "We were youths from the Banu Hashim. While we were sitting around Imam Al-Rida (‘a)Ja'far ibn 'Umar al-'Alawi passed by us in rags. We looked at each other and laughed at him, so Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said: 'In the near future he (Ja'far ibn 'Umar al-'Alawi) will have a lot of money and many followers." A month later, Ja'far became the governor of Madinah and enjoyed good conditions."[3]

4. Muhawil al-Sijista`ni narrated: "When Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was commanded to go to Khurasan, I was in Madinah. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) entered the mosque in order to say farewell to Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and his family). He said farewell to him several times. Throughout this (time) he went and came back to the grave. He wept and wailed aloud, so I walked towards him and greeted him, and he greeted me. I congratulated him, and he said to me: 'Leave me, for I am going to go out of the neighbourhood of my grandfather; I will die in exile and be buried beside Harun." I went out to follow him on the

1. **Al-Manaqib**, 3:447; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:34.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:224; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 47:247, *hadith* no. 5; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:93-94.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:225-226; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, vol 2:65; **noor al-Absar**, p. 243.

road until he arrived in Khurasan. He stayed in it for a time, and then he was buried by Harun."[1]

The matter was just as the Imam (‘a) had predicted. He went to Khurasan, and never returned. He was assassinated by Al-Ma’mun, the Abbasid Caliph, and was buried beside Harun al-Rashid.

5. Safwan ibn Yahya reported: " When Abu Ibrahim (i.e. Imam Kadhim) (‘a) passed away and Abu al-Hassan Al-Rida (‘a) spoke (i.e. undertook the office of the Imamah), we were afraid for him. He was told: 'You have made public a great matter and on account of that, we fear for you from this tyrant (i.e. Harun al-Rashid).' 'Let him try as hard as he can, ' he answered. 'He will find no way to harm me."[2]

It happened as he had predicted. Harun al-Rashid did not mistreat him. The Imam (‘a) underlined this meaning to his companions. Muhammad ibn Sinan reported: "I (i.e. Muhammad ibn Sina`n) said to Abu al-Hassan Al-Rida (‘a) during the days of Harun: 'Surely, you have made yourself famous through this matter and by sitting in the assembly of your father, while the sword of Harun is dripping blood (i.e. the blood of the Household of the Prophet and their followers). He, peace be on him, said: 'Allah's Messenger (may Allah bless him and his family) has encouraged me when he said: 'If Abu Jahl takes a hair from my head, then bear witness that I am not a prophet.' For this reason I say to you: 'If Harun (al-Rashid) takes a hair from my head, then bear witness that I am not an Imam."

Several times the Imam (‘a) announced that Harun would not mistreat him, and that he would be buried beside him. Hamza ibn Ja’far al-Larijani narrated: "Harun went out of the gate of the Sacred Mosque, and Ali went out of the gate and said: 'How remote the abode is! And how near the meeting is! Surely, Toos will gather me and him together!"

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2, p 234; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:49-117and 221.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:246; **al-Kafi**, 1:487; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:255; Ibn al-Sabbagh al-Maliki, **al-Fusulal-Muhimmah**, 2:975.

The Imam (‘a) referred to his burial beside Harun many times. Musa ibn Harun narrated: “While Harun al-Rashid was delivering a speech in the Mosque of Madinah, I saw Ali (Al-Rida) (‘a), and he said to me: 'You will see that I and he (Harun al-Rashid) will be buried in one house.”[1]

6. Another example of the Imam's (‘a) inner knowledge is the calamity of the Baramikah. Regarding this, Mussa`fir reported: “I (i.e. Mussa`fir) was with Abu` al-Hassan Ali Al-Rida, Yahya` ibn Kha`lid al-Barmaki passed by and covered his face with a handkerchief to avoid the dust. He (Abu al-Hassan Ali Al-Rida) (‘a) said: 'Wretched ones who do not know what will happen to them this year.'“ Then the Imam (‘a) added: “The more surprising thing than this is that I and Harun will be like these (two fingers of mine).” Then he joined his forefinger and middle finger together. Mussa`fir reported: “By Allah, I did not understand the meaning of Al-Rida's (‘a) words concerning Harun until his death and burial beside him.”[2]

7. Muhammad ibn 'Isa has reported on the authority of Habib al-Naba`ji, who said: “I saw Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, in a vision. He came to al-Nabaji[2] and stopped at the mosque where the pilgrims stop every year. I went to him and greeted him. There was before him a tray made of palm leaves, and Sayha`ni dates were in the tray. He gave me a handful of these dates. I counted them and they were eighteen. I asked (a person) to explain the vision and he told me that I would live for eighteen years. Twenty days later, while I was on my farm, a person came and told me about the coming of Al-Rida (‘a) from Madinah and his stopping at that mosque. I saw the people going to him, so I went to him. I saw him sitting in the place where Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, sat in the vision. There was before him a tray made of palm leaves, and there was Sayha`ni dates in it. I greeted him, and he, peace be on him,

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:247; **Kashf al-ghummah**, 3:96; **Al-Ithaf bi hubb al-Ashraf**, p. 316; **Noor al-Absar**:244; **Al-Ithaf bihubb al-Ashraf**, p. 316.
2. **Al-Kafi**, 1:245; **Noor al-Absar**, p. 243; **al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:976; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:258.

greeted me. He asked me to come nearer to him and gave me a handful of these dates. I counted them and they were equal to those which Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, had given to me. As a result I said: 'Increase me, O Son of Allah's Apostle!' He said: 'If Allah's Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, increased you, we would increase you."[1]

8. Ja'far ibn Salih narrated: "I came to Al-Rida (‘a) and said to him: 'My wife is pregnant, so supplicate Allah to let her give birth to a male.' As a result he said: 'They are twins.' I went away and said: 'I will name one of them Muhammad and the other Ali.' Then I came to him, and he said to me: 'Name one of them Ali and the other Umm 'Amru`.' When I went to Kufa, my wife had given birth to a male and a female, so I named the male Ali and the female Umm 'Amru."[2]

His Acts of Worship and Reverential Fear

One of the most prominent qualities of Imam Al-Rida (‘a), is his devotion to Allah, the Exalted, and his reverence to Him. We can clearly see this quality in his acts of worship which represent a great part of the light of his spiritual life, his fear of Allah and his piety.

One of his companions namely Ibrahim ibn Abbas said: "Imam Al-Rida (‘a) used to sleep but little in the night. He prayed until the morning came. He fasted often. He always fasted for three days of each month."[3]

Concerning his acts of worship, al-Shibra`wi has said: "Throughout the night he (Al-Rida) performed ablutions, prayed, and slept. In this manner he (continued) until the morning came."[4]

The Imam (‘a) was the most Allah–fearing of the people of his time

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:227; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:54; **Noor al-Absar**, p242-243; **Jame'a Karamat al-Awliya**, 2:311.
2. **Al-kharaij wa al-Jara'ih**, 1:362; **Noor al-Absar**, p. 243. **Al-Thaqibfi al-Manaqib**, p. 214; **al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2, p 977.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:198; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:63; **al-Manaqib**, 3:470.
4. **Al-Ithaf bi hubb al-Ashraf**, p. 312.

and the most obedient of them to Allah, the Most High. Al-Ma'mun sent Raja ibn Abu al-Dahhak to Madinah in order to bring the Imam (‘a) to Khurasan. The latter went and accompanied him on the road from Madinah to Marw. He reported the following about his acts of worship: “By Allah, I have never seen a man more (earnest) than him in seeking protection in Allah (the Great and Almighty), mentioning Him in all his times, and fearing Him. When he rose in the morning, he performed the Morning Prayer. When he finished his prayer and said the taslim, he sat in his place of prayer and (began) glorifying Allah, praising Him, saying: 'Allah is Greater! There is no god but Allah! O Allah bless the Prophet and his family, may Allah bless him and his family.' He continued these phrases until the sun rose. Then he prostrated himself in prayer for a long time. Then he went to the people to speak to them and to preach to them until it was forenoon. Then he renewed his ablution and returned to his place of prayer. When the sun came near to descending (from its midday zenith), he stood and prayed six rak'as. In the first rak'a he recited the sura al-Hamd and the sura al-Kafirun. In the second rak'a he recited the sura al-Hamd and the suraal-Ikhlas. In every rak'a of the four–rak'a prayers he recited the sura al-Hamd and the suraal-Ikhlas, and then he recited the taslim. Then he recited his personal prayer in the second rak'a before kneeling and after the recitation. Then he said the adhan (the call to prayer). Then he prayed two rak'as. Then he said the iqama (the declaration of standing for prayer) and performed the noon prayer. When he recited the taslim, he glorified Allah, praised Him, and said: 'Allah is Greater! There is no god but Allah!' He continued these phrases for a long time. Then he performed Salat al-Shukr (the prayer for giving thanks). In it he said: 'Thanks be to Allah, ' one hundred times. When he raised his head, he stood and prayed six rak'as. In each rak'a he recited the sura al-Hamd and the sura al-Ikhlas. After each two rak'as he recited the taslim. Then he said his personal prayer in the second rak'a before kneeling and after the recitation. Then he said the adhan (the call to prayer). Then he prayed two rak'as and said his personal prayer in the second rak'a. When he recited the taslim, he stood and performed the afternoon prayer. When he recited the taslim, he sat in his place of prayer, glorified Allah, praised Him, and said: 'Allah is Greater! There is no god but Allah!' Then he prostrated himself in prayer and said one hundred times: 'Thanks be to Allah.'

“When the sun set, he performed the ritual ablution, said the adhan and iqama, and performed the three rak'as of the evening prayer. Then he said his personal prayer in the second rak'a before the kneeling and after the recitation. When he recited the taslim, he sat in his place of prayer, glorified Allah, praised Him, and said: 'Allah is Greater! There is no god but Allah.' He recited these phrases for a long time. Then he performed Salat al-Shukr (the prayer for giving thanks). Then he raised his head and did not say anything until he stood and prayed four rak'as, finishing each two rak'as with the taslim. Then he said his personal prayer in the second rak'a before kneeling and after the recitation. In the first rak'a of these four rak'as, he recited the sura al-hamd and the sura al-Kafirun. In the second rak'a he recited the sura al-hamd and the sura al-Ikhlas. Then he recited the taslim. Then he sat and recited personal supplications until evening. Then he broke the fast. Then he stayed until about third of the night had passed. The he stood and performed the night prayer in four rak'as. Then he said his personal prayer in the second rak'a before kneeling and after the recitation. When he recited the taslim, he sat in his place of prayer mentioning Allah, the Great and Almighty, glorifying and praising Him, saying: 'Allah is Greater! There is no god but Allah!' He said these phrases for a long time. After saying his personal supplications, he performed Salat al-Shukr, and then he went to bed. “In the last third of the night he got up glorifying and praising (Allah), saying: 'Allah is Greater! There is no god but Allah!' And he asked Him for forgiveness. Then he cleaned his teeth with the miswa`k (cleaning stick for teeth). Then he performed the ritual ablution. Then he stood and performed the late night prayer. He said eight rak'as. After each two rak'as, he recited the taslim. In the first two rak'as of them, he recited the sura al-hamd and the sura al-Ikhlas thirty times.

“Then he performed the prayer of Ja’far ibn Abi–Talib , which is four rak'as. After each two rak'as, he recited the taslim. After the second rak'a of each two rak'as, he said his personal prayer before kneeling. He regarded it as (part) of the late night prayer. Then he performed the other two rak'as. In the first rak'a he recited the sura al-hamd and the sura al-mulk. In the second rak'a he recited the sura al-hamd and the sura al-Insan. Then he stood and performed the two rak'as of al-Shafa'. In each rak'a he recited the sura al-hamd one time and the sura al-Ikhlas three times. He said his personal prayer after the second rak'a.

Then he stood and performed (the prayer of al-witr), which is one rak'a. In it he recited the sura al-Hamd, the sura al-Ikhlas three times, the sura al-Falaq one time, and the sura al-Nas one time. Then he said his personal prayer before the kneeling and after the recitation. He would say (the following) in his personal prayer:

"'O Allah, bless Muhammad (s) and the Household of Muhammad (‘a). O Allah, guide us through him whom You guided, make us well through him whom You made well, attend to us through him to whom You attend, bless us in that which You have given, protect us from the evil of what You decree, for You decree and none decrees against You. Verily he whom You befriend is not lowly, and he toward whom You show enmity is not exalted, blessed are You and highly exalted!'

"Then he said seventy times: 'I ask Allah's forgiveness and seek repentance from Him.' When he recited the taslim, he sat and recited supplications for a long time. When dawn approached, he stood and prayed the two rak'as of the dawn. In the first rak'a he recited the sura al-hamad and the sura al-Kafirun. In the second rak'a he recited the sura al-hamad and the sura al-Ikhlas. When the dawn broke, he said the adhan and the iqama and performed the prayer of the early morning in two rak'as. When he recited the taslim, he sat and recited supplications until the sun rose. Then he performed Salat al-Shukr (the prayer for giving thanks)."[1]

The love for Allah dominated the Imam's (‘a) heart, sentiments and feelings, to the extent that it was one of his qualities.

Imam's (‘a) Supplications

Another quality of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was clinging to Allah for every affair. It gave him such mental and spiritual contentment that no material contentment could be compared with it. The ritual prayers and supplications coming in the following lines are some of Imam's (‘a) supplications:

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1. **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida**, 1:194-195; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:99-92-93. This Hadith continues talking about some of the ritual prayers and supplications which Imam (‘a) used to recite during his recommended prayers.

1.The following is his supplication in seeking security and faith: "O He who gives me evidence for Himself and humiliates my heart through certainty in Him, I ask You security and faith in this world and the next!"[1]

Despite its briefness, this supplication contains the concept of the unity of Allah, because, in this supplication, the Imam ('a) is accepting that Allah has guided his servants and has showed Himself to them with the help of the things which He has created and which are the signs and symbols of His Being.

2.There is another supplication of Imam Al-Rida ('a) in which he asks Allah to bless him with the blessing of guidance and keep him only His servant. Actually this is one of the greatest requests and positions which those seeking to cling to Allah ask for. He ('a), would supplicate with this great supplication: "O Allah, give me guidance; make me steadfast toward it; muster me according to it; make me safe with the safety of him upon whom there is neither fear nor sorrow nor impatience; You are worthy of reverential fear and worthy to forgive!"[2]

1. **Al-Kafi**, 2:579.
2. **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida**, 1, 4:63; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:188.

SECTION TWO

Chapter One
Imam Al-Rida's ('a) Upbringing

Chapter Two
The Stages of Imam Al-Rida's ('a) Life

Chapter Three
Imam Al-Rida ('a) Under the Wing of His Father

CHAPTER ONE
IMAM AL–RIDA'S (AS) UPBRINGING

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was a member of the most purified and glorified progeny who was blessed with the extreme level of perfection and glorification. The members of this family (peace be upon them all) had the extraordinary qualities such as good thinking, friendship and kindness towards the people and good morals and attitude. They lightened the path of humanity as shining stars lighten the dark nights. They are the best role models in history. Each of them, without exception, surrendered to Allah the most Exalted; they were the true followers of the Prophet (s) and were equal to the holy Qur'an in their value.

His father was Imam Kadhim (‘a) who was the heir for all good virtues and morals. Ibn Hajar Haythami says, praising Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) father: Imam Kadhim (‘a) had gained his wisdom, knowledge, virtues and perfection from his father and forefathers (‘a) as his inheritance. He was called “Kadhim” because of his forbearance. He always forgave those who wronged him. The people of Iraq named him “Baab al-Hawaij” (the door of fulfilling). He was the embodiment of virtue and generosity.[1]

As for the mother of Imam Al-Rida (‘a), she was a slave known as “Umm walad” (a bondwoman set free on the birth of her child). She was known as Najma, Arwa, Sakan, Saman, and Takktum (which is her last name).[2]

When this glorified woman gave birth to Imam Al-Rida (‘a), Imam

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1. **Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah**, 2:590.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:26; **Al-‘Ikhtisas, by Shaykh al-Mufid**, p. 197.

Kadhim (‘a) gave her the name of Tahira.[1]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was born in 148 A.H.[2] in Madinah. There are also references suggesting that he was born in 151 A.H. or 153 A.H.[3] However, the first tradition is more acceptable.[4]

When Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was born and his father Imam Kadhim (‘a) received with delight the news of the birth of his blessed baby, he hurried to his wife and congratulated her, saying: “I congratulate you, Najma. It is a mark of nobility for you from your Lord!” Imam Kadhim (‘a) took his blessed baby, wrapped it in a white piece of cloth, and performed the religious rites for him. He said the adhan in his right ear, said the iqama in his left ear, called for sweet water and rubbed his lower jaw with it, and then he returned him to his mother and said to her: “Take him, for he is the proof of Allah on His earth.”[5] Imam Kadhim (‘a) gave his blessed baby the name of his grandfather Imam Ali (‘a), the commander of the faithful.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had titles by which he was called. The most famous ones were: “Al-Rida, Sabir, Zaki, Wafi, Siraj al-Din, QurratAyn al-Mu'mineen, Makydat al-Mulhideen, Siddiq and Fadil.”[6]

Abu al-Hassan is the most famous kunya of Imam Al-Rida (‘a). As this kunya was common between them, Imam Kadhim (‘a) was called: Abu al-Hassan the past and Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was called Abu al-Hassan the second that the people might distinguish between the two Imams (‘a).

When Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was born, sixteen years had passed from the decline of the Amawids and the establishment of the Abbasid's

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1. **'Uyun akhbar alRida (‘a)**, 1:24-26; **Al-‘Ikhtisas**, by Shaykh al-Mufid, p. 197, **al-Manaqib**, 3:475-476.
2. **Al-Kafi**, 1, p. 486; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, , 2:40; al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2, p. 247.
3. **Shatharat al-thahab**, 2:67; Ibn Shahr 'ashub, **al-Manaqib**, 3:476.
4. **Al-Kafi**, 1:486.
5. **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida**, 1:29-30; **Kashf al-ghummah**, 3:90.
6. **Al-Manaqib**, 3:475; **Noor al-Absar**, p. 232; **Mtalib al-Souaol**, 2 p. 129.

government. There were an increasing number of followers of the holy Imams (‘a) and their teachings were spreading among them. Love and respect for the Household of the Prophet (‘a) had come to Islamic society.

This is not only a common belief, but the discussion between Imam Kadhim (‘a) and Harun al-Rashid makes clear what we said in the above lines. When Harun al-Rashid said to Imam Kadhim (‘a): “Is it you to whom the people swear the oath of their allegiance in secret?” the Imam (‘a) replied saying: “I am the Imam (‘a) [and dominant] for the people's souls and your dominance is only over their bodies.”[1]

All the people were awaiting a new born baby who was about to be nourished with the best virtues and glorifications so as to have a high position and play a vital role in the Islamic movement; and this new born baby was none other than Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a).

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was born in perfect physical condition. He suckled well. Her mother said in this regard: “Help me to find a wet nurse.”

She was asked: “Has your milk decreased?”

“I do not want to tell a lie”, she replied. “The milk has not decreased, but I want to perform part of my prayers and glorification.”[2]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was nourished in the shelter of greatness and magnificence. Like his father and forefathers (‘a), he was a perfect reflection of virtues and good qualities. He had quenched his thirst from the water of piety, sincerity and good attitude. Imam Musa ibn Ja’far (‘a) cared much about his son Ali (‘a) and always kept showering his blessings upon him. A tradition has been narrated from “Mufaddal ibn Amr” that he said: “I visited Abul Hassan Musa ibn Ja’far (‘a). He had his son Ali (‘a) in his lap. He kissed him. He sucked his lips and tongue and when he took him into his lap, he would give him a ride on his back saying: may my parents be ransom for you! How sweet–smelling you are! How purified is your body and how manifest are your virtues!

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1. **al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah**, p. 592; **Al-Ithaf bi hubb al-Ashraf**, pp. 298-299.
2. **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida**, 1:28; Al-Majlisi, **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:5.

I said to the Imam (‘a): may I be your ransom! The love for this child which I am feeling within me is not comparable with love for another person except for you!”

The Imam (‘a) said: “O Mufaddal! His relation to me is like my relation to my father. [And then he recited a verse from the holy book of Allah which says:] “Some of them are descendants of the others, and Allah is all–hearing, all–knowing.

I asked him: “Is he the next Imam (‘a) after you?”

The Imam (‘a) replied: “Yes.”[1]

Imam Musa ibn Ja’far (‘a) always loved and glorified his son Al-Rida (‘a). He would call him by his titles and kuniya. “Sulaiman ibn Hafs Marwazi” says: ““Musa ibn Ja’far (‘a) called his son [with the title of] Al-Rida (‘a) and said: “Call upon my son Al-Rida (‘a); I said to my son Al-Rida (‘a); or my son Al-Rida said to me.”

The narrator continues: Whenever Imam Kadhim (‘a) addressed him [Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a)], he said: “O Abul Hassan!”[2]

Imam Musa ibn Ja’far (‘a) always mentioned Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and started his pronouncements by praising and glorifying his son. He counted his virtues and talked about his good deeds to such a high degree which he would not use for another person; as if he wanted everyone to be aware of his [Al-Rida's] (‘a) post of Imamah after him [Imam Kadhim] (‘a) and in this way, he wanted to establish him as the Imam (‘a) after himself.”[3]

1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 1:40; Al-Majlisi, **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:20.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 1:23; **Kashf al-ghummah**, 3:89; Al-Majlisi, **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:4.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 1:38; Al-Majlisi, **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:18.

CHAPTER TWO
THE STAGES OF IMAM AL–RIDA'S (AS) LIFE

Like all the other Imams (‘a), Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) life should also be divided into two phases:

First: the time before taking charge of the Muslims' leadership as Imam (‘a);

Second: from the time of divine leadership till his martyrdom.

Certainly, each phase has some conditions which applied to every Imam's (‘a) life and can be split in many subdivisions.

According to different traditions, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) lived under the care of his father for 30 to 36 years starting from 148 A.H. [the year in which Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was born] till 183 A.H. [the year in which Imam Kadhim (‘a) was martyred.] In these three decades, Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) contemporary Abbasid caliphs were Mansur, Mahdi, Hadi and Harun al-Rashid. After the martyrdom of his father Imam Kadhim (‘a), Imam Al-Rida (‘a) took the charge of the Imamah and Muslim leadership. During this second phase of his life, he was a contemporary of Harun al-Rashid, Muhammad Amin and Abdullah Al-Ma'mun; and as is well–known, in the time of Al-Ma'mun, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was made crown prince. The Imam's (‘a) life on this level can be divided into two different parts:

1.The post of Imamah given by Allah till succession to the crown;

2.The time of obligation to accept the post of succession to the crown till the time of martyrdom.

In this manner, Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) life can be distributed into three phases:

First: from his birth till the time of his father Imam Kadhim‘s (‘a) martyrdom in 183 A.H.

Second: after the martyrdom of his father till his succession to the

crown in 200 A.H.

Third: from the time of imposed succession to the crown till the last moment of his life and martyrdom by Al-Ma'mun the Abbasid caliph in 203 A.H.

CHAPTER THREE
IMAM AL–RIDA (AS) UNDER THE WING OF HIS FATHER

In the historical period in which Imam Al-Rida (‘a) lived under the wing of his father, some events occurred which played a notable role in his activities and positioning in the later years as an Imam (‘a). To make the conditions and situations of those days clearer, we will mention some of the most important events.

1. Intellectual and religious deviations

During this period some movements emerged such as Mushabbaha (anthropomorphists), Mujabbira (determinists), Mufawwiza and the events of “Qiyas”, and “Istehsan” and “Ra'i” a group of jurisprudents – working for the government – was also in favour of them and always defended them. This, together with an atmosphere filled with jurisprudential controversies and political disagreements, was seriously threatening the era of Imam Al-Rida (‘a).

2. Ethical and economic corruption

During the life of his father, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was contemporary to the rulers who considered the property of the Muslims their own, and spent this in the way they wanted. They spent the money and property of the treasury according to their own wishes. While doing so, they did not even think about Muhammadanreligious rules and about what would happen to the Muslims.

On his death, al-Mansur al-Dawaniqi left behind him fourteen million dinars and six hundred million dirhams.[1]

When Marwan ibn Hifs visited Mahdi [the Abbasid caliph] and recited some verses of poetry for him, praising his family, and blaming the

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1. **Morouj al-Thahab**, 3:338, **siar A'alam al-Nubala**, 7:89.

household of the Prophet (‘a) in them, he was given a reward of seventy thousand dirhams by Mahdi.[1]

When Abdullah ibn Mali” offered a singer bondmaid to Mahdi, Mahdi sent to him forty thousand [dirhams] for his offer.[2]

Harun al-Rashid was an alcoholic. His drinking companions were Ja’far Barmakid and his sister Abbasa, the daughter of Mahdi. Whenever he wanted to drink wine he first called both these companions. And when they were inebriated, Harun would leave his sister and Ja’far Barmakid alone to become unconscious from the drink.[3]

3. Political corruption

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was observing Abbasid's arrangements on the issue of caliphate. They had propagated among the people that this divine post had been transferred to them by Al-Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet (s). They used to transfer the post of caliphate from one to another among their family without any legal or divine authority for doing so. They refused to hand over this post to those who were designated by Allah and His Messenger (s) the rightful ones for it. The Abbasid caliphs wanted each and everything to be under their own control. That is why they had ordered even the judges to order as the caliphs wished. They used religion as a cover to deceive common and simple people. They had propagated among the people and had made them believe that the Abbasids were the rightful people for the post of caliphate and had been selected by Allah and His Prophet (s) and that no one had the right to criticize this family under any circumstance.

4. Muslims' Respect for the Household (‘a)

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) lived at a time when the people had great love and respect for the Household (‘a) which was the result of hard work by the Imams (‘a) preceding Imam Al-Rida (‘a).

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1. **Tarikh Tabari**, 6:402; **siar A'alam al-Nubala**, 7:403.
2. **Tarikh Tabari**, 6:404.
3. **Tarikh Tabari**, 8:489-490; **al-Kamil fi al- Tarikh**, 6:175; **Wafiyat al-Ayaan**, 1:344.

The love for the Household (‘a) dominated society to such a high level that even Harun al-Rashid – a great enemy of the Household (‘a) – criticized it and said to Imam Kadhim (‘a): “It is to you that the people swear the oath of their allegiance in secret.”[1]

Despite such a confession from Harun al-Rashid, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) observed how cunning his actions were and how often he called upon Imam Kadhim (‘a). Imam Al-Rida (‘a) also observed how Harun al-Rashid imprisoned his father and how he finally martyred him.

5. Famous Revolts

Among other events occurring during the time of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) when he was living under the care of his father (‘a) were the armed revolts. One of the famous revolts was the uprising of Husayn ibn Ali ibn al-Hassan ibn Imam Hassan (known as Shahid Fakh) who revolted against the governor of Madinah. Eventually he and a number of his companions (may Allah be pleased with them) attained martyrdom.

However, the martyrdom of Hussain and his companions did not stop other revolutionaries from continuing their struggles in this regard. Many other revolts also took place against the Abbasid government. In 176 A.H. there was another revolution under the leadership of “Yahya ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hassan. To defeat him, Harun al-Rashid sent an army of many thousand men. Later on, his life was guaranteed. Then he was sent to jail. Yahya passed away in jail.[2]

With a little consideration of history, we realise that these uprisings were against the tyranny of the Abbasid caliphs and rulers towards the Shia and Alawis.

The above is a summary of the most important events which occurred at the time of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and Imam Kadhim (‘a). In the following chapters, we will discuss how Imam Al-Rida (‘a) faced these events and how he used his post of Imamah against them, inshallah.

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1. **Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah**, 2:592; **Al-Ithaf bi hubb al-Ashraf**, pp. 298-299.
2. **Tarikh Tabari**, 6:449-454; **al-Kamil fi al- Tarikh**, 6:125.

Imam Kadhim (‘a) providing a Basis for Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) Imamah

The Holy Prophet (s) mentioned the responsibilities of the Imams (‘a) one of which is as follows:

“Among every generation of my Ummah, there are some just people of my progeny who prevent the misled from cracking the religion, their false claim for assignation and the interpretation of Islam by the ignorant.” [They keep Islam safe from other people's harm.][1]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was also not an exception in this regard. However, it is necessary to mention here that the responsibilities can be borne by an Imam only when he has taken the charge of Imamah. However, when with his father, his responsibility is to follow the rules and orders given by his father, because it is his father – the Imam – who is responsible for the fulfillment of those duties, while the successor is allowed to perform his duties only when he is ordered by the Imam (‘a) at that time. To make this problem clear and to say that there can be more than one Imam at a time it has been said: “No, only when one of them is silent.”[2]

Therefore, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) kept silent during the time of his father Imam Kadhim’s (‘a) Imamah, because, he had not taken the Muslim leadership as Imam. He just followed his father’s (‘a) orders. However, it does not mean that Imam Al-Rida (‘a) or any other Imam living under the wing of his father or an Imam before him just kept silence and did nothing for the betterment of the people. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had his own responsibilities among Islamic Ummah, and he preached Islamic values; he issuedanswers to doctrinal and jurisprudential questions, and sat on the minbar of the Prophet’s (‘a) mosque and gave fatwa. He was then just twenty years old.[3]

Thahabi said of Imam Al-Rida (‘a): “He [while he was a young man]

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1. **Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah,** p. 221; **Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah**, 2:441; **Jawahir al-'aqdain**, second part, 1:91; **al-Kafi**, 1:32.
2. **Al-Kafi**, 1:178; **kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah**, p. 224.
3. **Tahthib al-Tahthib,** 7:339; **Tarikh Baghdad**, 4:135.

gave fatwas in the time of Malik."[1]

At the time of his great father Imam Kadhim (‘a), he promoted good and banned evil. He narrated Hadiths from his father and forefathers (‘a). In this way, he took part in spreading the Hadiths of the Household (‘a) and the conduct of the Holy Prophet (s) among the people.

Some narrators such as "Abu Bakr, Ahmad ibn Hubab Himiyari", "Dawood ibn Sulaiman ibn Yousuf Ghazi", "Sulaiman ibn Ja'far" and others have narrated Hadiths from him.[2]

During his meetings with his companions and on several occasions Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (‘a) successfully tried to prepare the people's mind and make them know that Imam Al-Rida (‘a) would be their next Imam. He also asked his companions to refer to his son. Here we will mention some of Imam Kadhim's (‘a) sayings and guidance related to Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) Imamah:

"This is my son – Ali. His letter is my letter. His words are my words. His sayings are my sayings. His messenger is my messenger; and [the truth is] what he says."[3]

Also Imam Kadhim (‘a) used to say to his other sons: "This is your brother Ali ibn Musa, who is the scholar of the Household of Muhammad (may Allah bless him and his Household). Question him about your beliefs and memorize what he says to you, for I heard my father Ja'far say: ‘The scholar of the Household of Muhammad (may Allah bless him and his Household), is in your loins. Would that I met him, for he is the namesake of (Imam Ali), the Commander of the Faithful."[4]

Whenever Imam Kadhim (‘a) was able, he tried to make ground for the succession to his son Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a). Once he said to

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1. **Siar A'lam al-Nubala'**, 9:388.
2. **Tahthib al-Kamal**, 21:148; **Tahthib al-Tahthib**, 7:338.
3. **Al-Kafi**, 1:312; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 1:39; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:250; **Tusi, al- Ghibah**, p. 37; **al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:968.
4. **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:64-65; **Al-Irbali, Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:111; **Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim**, 2:164.

Ali ibn Yaqteen: "O Ali ibn Yaqteen, this Ali is leader and greater than my other sons. I have given him my own Kuniya."[1]

Imam Kadhim's ('a) Will regarding the Next Imam ('a)

The Imamah is a divine post with great and heavy responsibilities not possible without the permission of Allah and His Prophet Muhammad(s). Muslims do not have the right to be involved in choosing their Imam, because they do not have the ability to recognize an Infallible Imam; an Imam for whom Allah has made purification one of the most necessary things: "And when his Lord tested Abraham with certain words, and he fulfilled them, He said, "I am making you the Imam of mankind." He said, "And from among my descendants?" He said", My pledge does not extend to the unjust."

Traditions related to the Prophet (s) also confirm that an Imam ('a) is chosen by Allah. The Prophet (s) when calling to monotheism said: "The affair [of prophethood and Imamah] belongs to Allah which He gives to anyone He wishes."[2]

On several occasions, the Prophet (s) mentioned in different words that there would be twelve Imams ('a) after him and all of them would be from Quraish.[3]

There are also other traditions according to which all the Imams ('a) are from Bani Hashim. For example, the Prophet (s) said: "After me there will be twelve caliphs (successors) and all of them will be from Bani Hashim."[4]

There are countless traditions saying that Bani Hashim means the

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1. Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:249; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 1:31; **al-Kafi**, 1:311.
2. **Tarikh Tabari**, , 2:84; Ibn Kathir, **al-Sirah al-Nabawiah**, 2:159; Ibn Hisham, **al-Sirah al-Nabawiah**, 2:289; Ibn al-Athir, **al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh**, 2:84.
3. **kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah**, p. 68; Musnad Ahmed Ibn Hanbal 1:398; **Sahih Muslim**, 6:3; **Sunan Abi Dawood**, 2:309; **Amali al-Sadoq**, p. 387.
4. **Yanabi' al-Mawadah**, 2:315; **Mawaddat al-Qurba**, 3:290.

progeny of Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) and the sons of Imam Hussain (‘a).[1]

Also, there are traditions in which the names of the Imams (‘a) are mentioned. Some of these traditions have mentioned them in general; while others have specially mentioned their names, such as the following tradition in which the Prophet (s) said:

“After me there are twelve Imams; the first, fourth and eighth of them being Ali.”[2]

According to the traditions mentioned above, the Imamah is proved only by the will and recommendation [of the previous Imam] and is based on the promise with the Prophet (s) on the basis of which every Imam assigns the Imam after him and pledges him the divine post.

Imam Sadiq (‘a) said in a narration:

“Do you think we are authorized to transfer the affair [of Imamah and succession] to whosoever we want? By God, it is not so. This [Imamah] is a promise to the Prophet (s) which is given to each person of this family so that it is handed over to its real owner.”[3]

Imam Kadhim (‘a) also had the responsibility of introducing the Imam after him to the Muslim Ummah. On the basis of his responsibility, he introduced Imam Al-Rida (‘a) to his companions, sometimes in clear words and sometimes indicatively. By doing this, the Imam (‘a) wanted his companions to introduce Imam Al-Rida (‘a) to the common people when it was the right time. However, Imam Kadhim (‘a) did not introduce Imam Al-Rida (‘a) publicly because he feared the conditions which were imposed on the Shi'ahs by the Abbasid government.

However, the traditions in this regard clearly mention that Imam Kadhim (‘a) introduced his son Imam Al-Rida (‘a) as his successor and Imam after him.

Na'im Bin Qabus said: Abu al-Hassan (Musa) (‘a) said: “My son Ali is the eldest of my children, the most attentive of them to my words, and

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1. **Kifayat al-Athar**, pp. 100, 128, 194 and 199. **al-Manaqib**, 1:2541.
2. **Ma'arij al-Yaqin fi Usulal-Din**, p. 62.
3. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 33:70 ; **kmal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah**, p. 222

the most obedient of them to my order. He examined the leather case (jafr) and the scroll (al-jami'a). Only a prophet or the testamentary trustee of a prophet may examine them."[1]

Imam Kadhim (‘a) mentioned the Imamah of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) from the very first days of his life.

In the narration by Mufaddal ibn Amr one reads that Mufaddal said to Imam (‘a): May I be your ransom! The love for this child which I feel within me is not comparable with love for another person except for you!"

The Imam (‘a) said: "O Mufaddal! His relation to me is like my relation to my father. [And then he recited a verse from the holy Book of Allah which says:] "some of them are descendants of the others, and Allah is all–hearing, all–knowing.

I asked him: "Is he the next Imam after you?"

The Imam (‘a) replied: "Yes."[2]

His Will during the First Stages (150–178 AH)

Imam Kadhim (‘a) introduced Imam Al-Rida (‘a) as his successor to his companions and trustworthy followers and asked them to follow Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and listen to what he had to say. Imam Kadhim (‘a) introduced his son both in a direct and indirect way.

Dawood ibn Razin tells us that he said: "I took some property for Abu Ibrahim [Musa Kadhim – as]. The Imam (‘a) took part of it and returned the rest to me.

I said to him: "May Almighty Allah (swt) protect you! Why did you give it back to me?"

The Imam (‘a) said: "Keep it until its owner takes it from you after me."

When Imam Musa ibn Ja’far (‘a) left the world, Imam Al-Rida

1. **Kafi**, 1:311-312; **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida**, 1:40; al-Tusi, **Al-Ghaybah**, p. 36.
2. **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida**, 1:40; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:20.

(‘a)sent a courier who said to me: “Give us what is with you.”

Then I sent the property to Imam Al-Rida (‘a).[1]

We can see that in the above narration Imam Kadhim (‘a) does not mention the name of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) but by saying “Keep it until its owner takes it from you after me” stresses the Imamah of his son.

Imam Kadhim (‘a) sometimes only mentioned the Imamah of his son Imam Al-Rida (‘a) indirectly; he did so to be appropriate to the level of his addressees.

Abdullah Hashimi said: “We and our friends – some sixty people – went to the holy tomb of the Prophet (s). Abu Ibrahim Musa ibn Ja’far (‘a) also arrived with his son Ali's hand in his. He said: “Do you know who I am?”

We said: “You are our master!”

He said: “Repeat my lineage.”

We said: “Musa ibn Ja’far ibn Muhammad (‘a).”

He said: “Do you know who this [person] is with me?”

We said: “He is Ali ibn Musa ibn Ja’far.”

He said: “Bear witness that during my life he is my deputy and that he will be my administrator after my death.”[2]

This tradition not only clearly mentions the Imamah and succession toImam Al-Rida (‘a), but also is a kind of a testament from a father to his son. The reason behind Imam Kadhim’s (‘a) multidimensional words were the political conditions dominating society which were filled with killing, suppression and oppression.

According to the requirements of the age, on some occasions Imam Kadhim (‘a) mentioned the issue of the Imamah of his son in front of some of his companions and sometimes in front of all of them.

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1. **Kafi**, 1:313; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 1:251-252; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:47; al-Tusi, **al-Ghaybah**, p. 93, *hadith* no. 18.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:36; **Kifayat al-Athar**, p. 272; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:15.

Dawud ibn Kuthayr al-Raqqi said: I said to Musa al-Kadhim: "May I be your ransom, I have grown old. So take my hand and save me from hellfire. Who is our leader (sahib) after you?"

"This is your leader after me", he said and pointed to his son Abul Hasan Al-Rida (‘a)."[1]

Haydar ibn Ayyub reported: "We were at a place called al-Qaba in Madinah. Muhammad ibn Zayd ibn Ali was at this place. He arrived after the time that he usually came. We asked him: "May Allah make us your ransom, what delayed you?" He answered: "Abu Ibrahim (‘a) summoned us today. We were seventeen men from among the children of Ali and Fatimah (‘a). He made us witness that his son Ali was his testamentary trustee and his deputy during his lifetime and after his death, and that his order was valid against him and for him." Then Muhammad said: "O Hayder, by Allah, he entrusted the Imamah to him today."[2]

Sometimes, Imam Kadhim (‘a) mentioned the Imamah of his son clearly and without any ambiguity in his words. Abdullah ibn Harth, whose mother was the granddaughter of Ja’far ibn Abi Talib (‘a), narrated: ‘Abu Ibrahim (‘a) summoned us and we gathered. Then he said: "Do you know why I have summoned you?"

"No", we answered.

"Witness that this son of mine is my trustee (wasi) and the one who will superintend my affair, my successor after me. He who has a debt (to be collected) from me, let him collect it from this son of mine. Whoever I have made a promise to, let him get its fulfillment from him. Whoever has to meet me, will only do so through his correspondence."[3]

These clear announcements were for his special and most reliable companions. Imam Kadhim (‘a) announced in this manner only when

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1. **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:967; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:248; **Kafi**, 1:312.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:37; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:16-17.
3. **al-Kafi**, 1:312; **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:36; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:250-251; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:45.

there were no strangers. However, when he was among the common people, he announced the Imamah of his son Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) with words which had double meanings and let the people deduct the meanings from his words according to their own understanding and mental level.

Hassan ibn Bashr said: Abul Hasan Musa ibn Ja’far (‘a) appointed for us his son Ali just as Allah's Apostle (s) appointed Ali (‘a) on the Day of Ghadir Khum. He said: “O People of Madinah or he said O People of the Mosque, this [my son Ali] is my testamentary trustee after me.”[1]

There is another narration by Abdurrahman ibn Hajjaj saying: “Abul Hassan Musa ibn Ja’far made a testament about his son Ali’s (‘a) Imamah and wrote a document and asked sixty people of Madinah to bear witness of it.”[2]

In 178 A.H. Imam Kadhim (‘a) mentioned to Muhammad ibn Sinan about his testament relating to his son Ali‘s (‘a) Imamah.[3]

Imam’s (‘a)Testament when He was in Prison

Imam Musa Kadhim (‘a) was captured on the seventh of the month of Dhul Hajjah in 179 A.H. (only one day before “tarwiyyah”). According to another tradition he was captured on 27th of the month of Rajab of the same year.[4]

After fifty days of his imprisonment, Ali and Ishaq, the sons of Abdullah ibn Imam Ja’farSadiq (‘a) met Abdur Rahman ibn Aslam who was then in Makkah. They had a letter from Imam Kadhim (‘a). The handwriting was the Imam’s (‘a). The letter contained details of work to be done. They said to Abdur Rahman: “The Imam (‘a) has asked you to perform these deeds in this way. And if you have anything of him, give it to his son Ali because he is his successor and

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:37; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:17.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:37; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:17.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:40-41; **al-Kafi**, 1:319; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:253.
4. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:206; **al-Kafi**, 1:476.

administrator of his deeds."[1]

When Imam Kadhim (‘a) was being taken to Basra prison, he summoned Abd Allah ibn Marhum, gave him a letter and ordered him to carry it to his son Ali (‘a) and then he said: "He is my testamentary trustee, the one who will undertake my affairs, and the most meritorious of my children."[2]

Imam Kadhim (‘a) wrote several letters to his companions from prison in which he told them to follow his son, Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a), who was his successor and testamentary trustee."

Hussain ibn Mukhtar said: "When Abul Hassan (‘a) was in prison, we received some letters from him in which he had written: "My Imamah and succession belong to my eldest son."[3]

If we consider the period of being prisoner in Basra as one year, accepting the above–mentioned, he entered Baghdad in 180 A.H. where Ali ibn Yaqtin met the Imam (‘a) and found his son Ali sitting with him. Imam Kadhim said to him: "O Ali ibn Yaqtin, this is the sayyid (leader) of my children and I have gifted him with my own Kunya (the Arabic expression used to address people, ‘O father of so and so, etc.)."

When Ali ibn Yaqtin mentioned this to Hisham ibn Hakam, Hisham said to him: "I can tell you that the task (Leadership with Divine Authority) will be with him after him."

During 181 and 183 A.H. Imam Kadhim (‘a) wrote to Ali ibn Yaqtin for the second time from prison: "Certainly this son of mine [Ali] is the master of my children and I have given him my kunya."[4]

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:312; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:16.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:39; **al-Kafi**, 1:312; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:250; al-Tusi, **al-Ghaybah**, p. 36-37; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:46.
3. **Kafi**, 1:311; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:21; **al-Irshad**, 2:249; **Tusi al-Ghaybah**, p. 35.
4. **Kafi**, 1:313; Irshad, Shaykh al-Mufid. possibly this tradition was narrated under the dominating conditions of those days. The narrator mentioned it ambiguously because of the tense conditions. However, Imam

Announcement of Imam Al-Rida's ('a) Imamah at the Appropriate time

The conditions dominating the time of Imam Kadhim ('a) required him to work on his positioning and political activities, especially those relating to the Imam ('a) and his successors in secret. That is why Imam Kadhim ('a) refrained from making Imam Al-Rida's ('a) Imamah known. However, he provided Imam Al-Rida ('a) with a certain period in which to announce his Imamah.

Yazid ibn Salit al-Zaydi narrated: "Once we were on our way to Makkah when we met Abu Abdullah ('a) and I said, "May Allah take my soul and the souls of my parents in service for your cause, you all of you are purified Imams; however, no one is immune from death. Tell me a few things that I may say to my descendants so that they may not go astray." The Imam ('a) said, "Yes, [I will], these are my sons and this one is their master. He pointed to his son, Imam Musa ('a).

I later met Abul Hassan Musa ('a) and I said to him: "May Allah take my soul and the souls of my parents in service for your cause, inform me about your successor just as your father informed about you." The Imam ('a) said: "My father lived in a time that was not like this time… when I came out of my house, I gave my will to my son Ali andallowed my other sons to take part in my instructions with him but I gave my directive will to him in private and wanted him to be alone. Then the Imam ('a) said, "O Yazid, this is a trust with you. Do not inform anyone about it other than a person of reason or a servant (of Allah) whom you know to be truthful. [O Yazid, you must understand that] he must not speak soon after the death of Harun at least for four years. And when four years have passed, ask him any question and he will answer it, inshallah."[1]

Kadhim ('a) meant to point towards his son Ali ibn Mussa al-Rida ('a) because the original tradition is: (Arabic text).

1. **Kafi**, 1:313-316; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 1:33-35; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2, p. 47-50.

SECTION THREE

Chapter One
Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and his father's difficulties

Chapter Two
Deviations in the time of Imam Al-Rida (‘a)

Chapter Three
Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) role before his succession to the crown

CHAPTER ONE
IMAM AL–RIDA (AS) AND HIS FATHER'S DIFFICULTIES

Harun had come to understand the deep relationship between Imam Kadhim (‘a) and the people. He was observing how the Imam’s (‘a) base was getting stronger and stronger; and regarding the Imam (‘a) the people would first compare his conduct with Harun's and then be able to differentiate between what was right and what was wrong. Therefore he thought that if the Imam (‘a) freely continued his activities, he would become a great danger to his government. Therefore he decided to imprison the Imam (‘a), stop him from continuing his activities, keep his moves under control and decrease the level of his influence among Muslims.

On the other hand, seeing the Imam (‘a) every now and then and being criticized by him had become unbearable for Harun and he could not keep quiet about the Imam’s (‘a) positioning any longer. Imam Kadhim’s (‘a) condition was similar, because he could not keep quiet on seeing Harun's aggressive actions against the Islamic Ummah, the religion and the tradition of the Prophet (s). This controversy appeared on many occasions. For example, Harun said to Imam Kadhim (‘a): “please mark the area of the “Fadak” (the land property of Lady Fatimah (’a) which was unjustly usurped) so that we return it to you.” The Imam (‘a) said: “If you are to return the Fadak, you must accept its true borders.” Then the Imam (‘a) started explaining the borders of the Fadak naming Aden to Samarkand, Africa, the ocean and whatever lay beyond the Caspian Sea and Asia Minor.

By saying this, Imam Kadhim (‘a) proved that Fadak was nothing but the usurped caliphate and administration of the Prophet (s). It was at this point that Harun decided to assassinate the Imam (‘a).”[1]

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1. **Tathkirt al-Khawas**, 2:446; **Rabi'a al-Abrar**, 1:316-317; **al- Manaqib**, 3:435.

Once Harun visited the tomb of the Prophet (s) and said: "Peace be upon you, Apostle of Allah (s)! Peace be upon you, cousin."

Imam Musa al-Kadhim ('a) greeted the great Prophet (s), saying: "'Peace be upon you, Apostle of Allah (s)! Peace be upon you, father!"

Harun was going through a political and mental phase demanding him to confess the truth. Therefore he said: "This is an honour."

However, the Imam's ('a) behaviour planted the seed of revenge in the heart of Harun, because of which in 169 A.H. Harun called upon the Imam ('a) and imprisoned him for a long period of time;[1] then he freed him.

Once, Imam Kadhim ('a) was called upon by Harun al-Rashid. Harun asked him: "What is this place?"

The Imam ('a) replied: "This is the place for corrupt people."[2]

On the other hand, informers stirred up Harun against Imam Kadhim ('a). One of these informers was Yahya Barmaki. He said to Harun: "Property is sent to him [Imam Kadhim ('a)] both from east and west; and he is the owner of many treasures."[3]

All these factors compelled Harun al-Rashid to imprison Imam Musa al-Kadhim ('a). Imam Kadhim ('a) was imprisoned in 179 A.H. in Basra for one year. Then in 180 A.H. he was taken to Baghdad prison and tortured. In the end, he was martyred by Sindi ibn Shahik – one of Harun's hangmen.

According to Ali ibn Yaqtin's narration about Imam Kadhim's ('a) testament regarding Imam Al-Rida's ('a) Imamah, Imam Al-Rida ('a) went to visit his father, Imam Kadhim ('a), when he was in prison for

1. **Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah**, 10:197; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:434; **Tahthib al-Kamal**, 29:49-50; **TarikhBaghdad**, pp. 13-32.
2. **Al-Ikhtisas,** p. 262; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:138 and 69:136; **Tafsir al-'Ayashi**, 2:29.
3. **Maqatil al-Talibin**, p. 334; **al-Ghibah**, p. 28; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48, p. 222.

the first few years.[1]

Imam Kadhim (‘a) had ordered his son Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) to sleep near the door of his house unless the news of his martyrdom [Imam Kadhim’s (‘a) martyrdom] was given to him. To fulfill his father's order, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) slept at the door of his house for four years. One night he was delayed and the bed was prepared for him. He did not come as usual and the family was alarmed and deeply saddened. His delay was a very great matter that overwhelmed them. In the morning he came to the house and went to the family room to ’Umm (mother of) Ahmad and said to her, “Bring me the things that my father has entrusted to you.” She began to cry, beat her face and tore her clothes over her heart saying, “My master, by Allah, has passed away.” He stopped her and said, “Do not say anything to anyone and do not make it public before the news of his death comes to the governor.”[2]

Muhammad ibn Fadhl Hashimi was appointed by Imam Kadhim (‘a) to give the news of his martyrdom to his son Imam Al-Rida (‘a). The Imam (‘a) gave him some things to hand over to Imam Al-Rida (‘a). Muhammad fulfilled the command of Imam Kadhim (‘a) and went to Basra the same day to inform the people of Basra of Imam Kadhim ‘s (‘a) martyrdom. Three days after his arrival in Basra, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) also arrived in Basra fulfilling the promise which he had made to Muhammad and the people swore the oath of allegiance to Al-Rida (‘a) as Imam. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) left for Madinah on the same day. Then he went to Kufa where he met the followers of his father. After meeting them, he returned to Madinah.[3]

When the people of Madinah received the news of Imam Kadhim’s (‘a) death, the followers of the Household (‘a) gathered

1. **Kafi**, 1:311; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:31; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:249.
2. **Kafi**, 1:381 and 382; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:246.
3. **Al-khara'ij wa al-Jaraih**, 1:341; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:73.

outside the house of Umm Ahmad where they met Ahmad ibn Musa.[1] Ahmad took them to the house of his brother Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) door where they swore the oath of allegiance to him as the next Imam (‘a).[2]

As Imam Kadhim (‘a) had ordered, Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) Imamah remained unknown to the people other than his companions for four years. During these four years, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) did not let anyone from amongst the Muslims come to know about his Imamah.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was aware of his father's (‘a) pain and the long periods which he passed in different prisons till the very last day of his life. However, the conditions were not in favour of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and he felt it better not to challenge the government. Therefore, he tolerated all the pain and did not take any action against the government, because it was a time when all Muslims, Shi'is and followers of the Household (‘a) in particular were living under very difficult conditions.

A Relatively Improvement of the Political Conditions during the Time of Harun

Imam Kadhim (‘a) was martyred in 183 A.H.[3] by Harun's special men fulfilling his orders. Harun al-Rashid was afraid to make the announcement of Imam Kadhim's (‘a) death among the people. Therefore, he thought of a plan and pretended to know nothing about his death. So, he summoned the leaders, notables, judges and the people of the family of Hashim, removed the shroud from Imam Kadhim's (‘a) face and said to them: “Do you see on him any mark which you regard as abominable?”

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1. The holy shrine of Ahmad ibn Mussa – known as Shah Cheragh – is in Shiraz, Iran which is regularly visited by the followers of the Household (‘a).
2. For details of this event see **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:307 and 308 (Sayid Ja'far Bahr al-Uloom, **Tuhfat al-'Alim**).
3. Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:251-242; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:33; **Ethbat al-Wasiyah**, pp. 200-201.

"No", they answered.[1]

On the other hand, al-Sindi ibn Shahik played his hypocritical role and asked the notable people and jurists of Baghdad to come to his prison and observe the dead body of Imam Kadhim (‘a) from close hand to and see that there was no sign of a wound or suffocation. Then he asked for their witnessing this to be written down, saying that he [Imam Kadhim (‘a)] had died a natural death and they did so. Then the dead body of Imam Kadhim (‘a) was put on the bridge of Baghdad, as was ordered by al-Sindi – and he shouted: "This is [the dead body of] Musa ibn Ja’far (‘a). Come and see from his face and body that he has died a natural death."[2]

The possibility of the people's revolt against the government on hearing the news of Imam Kadhim’s (‘a) martyrdom had worried Harun al-Rashid. Therefore, to calm the people and to deceive them, he refrained from putting Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and his family under pressure.He also rejected those people's suggestions who suggested killing Imam Al-Rida (‘a).

Among such people was Isa ibn Ja’far whose suggestion was strongly objected to and rejected by Harun. He said to Harun: "Do not forget what you have sworn to me about the household of Abi Talib (‘a). You have sworn to chop off the head of anyone who claims to be a Divine Leader after Musa ibn Ja’far (‘a). Now this is his son Ali (Al-Rida-as-) who is claiming to possess the Divine Leadership, and people are saying the same thing about him that they said about his father." Harun looked at him angrily and said: "So Do you think that I should kill them all?"[3]

Furthermore when "Khalid ibn Yahya Barmaki" provoked Harun for killing Imam Al-Rida (‘a), Harun said to him: "What we did with his

1. **Tarikh al-Ya’qubi**, 2:414.
2. Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:242; **Kashf al-ghummah**, 3:27; **al-Ghibah**, p. 31.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:246; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:113.

father is enough for us. Do you want me to kill them all?"[1]

Certainly we are assured that Harun al-Rashid's behaviour was not generated from his regret of what he had done to the Household of the Prophet (‘a) but was only to stop the people from getting angry and allowing them remain peaceful. On the other hand, Harun’s informers, whom he had appointed to collect information about Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) activities, were unable to inform him of any slightest inclination of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) against his government.

The Imamah

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) kept silent for four years after his father’s (‘a) martyrdom; these years were from 183 to 187 A.H. During these years he did not do anything such as claiming the post of Imamah, delivering sermons, giving public meetings or coming to a public gathering. Certainly, the informers of Harun knew of everything. They regularly informed Harun about how Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was avoiding taking part in events. The following narration makes this clear:

“One day Abul Hassan Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) went to the bazaar and bought a dog, a ram and a cock. Then when the agents wrote to Harun about this he said: “Now I am secure from his side.”[2]

Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) silence made Harun al-Rashid disbelieve in the reports given by his agents and informers. When one of Zubayr ibn Awam’s descendants (who was a security agent) wrote that Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) had opened up the door of his house and was inviting people in, Harun said: “How strange this agent is? One writes that Ali ibn Musa (‘a) went out and bought a dog, a ram and a cock and now another one is writing this!”[3]

In this way, Harun neglected what was reported by Zubayr and did not

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:246; **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, p. 245; **Nur al-Absar**, p. 243.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:222; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:60; **Kashf al-ghummah**, 3:109.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:222; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:61; **Kashf al-ghummah**, 3:109.

harm Imam Al-Rida (‘a) but left him on his own to do whatever he wanted.

In 187 A.H. when four years had passed since Imam Kadhim’s (‘a) martyrdom, Harun al-Rashid became angry with the group of Barmakids and asked his headsmen. The death of the Barmakids had a great role in political change, because they played a very important part in the Abbasid (‘a) dynasty and had strengthened it. They were the people who put their efforts into the complete removal of the Household of the Prophet (‘a). With their removal from the political fields of that era, the level of enmity against the Household of the Prophet (‘a) also decreased. Now the conditions were favourable for Imam Al-Rida (‘a) to act upon the testament of his father Imam Kadhim (‘a) and make his own Imamah manifest to the people. Some of his companions prohibited him from doing so and said to him: “You have manifest a great affair. We are afraid for your life.’

The Imam (‘a) who was certain that Harun could do no harm to him at all said: “Let him do whatever he wants to and whatever he can because he will not be able to do harm to me.”[1]

When the Imam’s (‘a) companions mentioned the danger of announcing his Imamah for the second time, the Imam (‘a) said to them: “If Harun does the slightest harm to me, then certainly I am a liar.”[2]

Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) responsibility was not to challenge the government or rise against it, but his real responsibility was to take leadership of the Muslims as the religious successor of his great father (‘a) to open a multi–dimensional war against deviated beliefs and thoughts which were dominating the society in those days. Also, his responsibility was to propagate pure Islamic thoughts in the fields of beliefs and religious rule. On the other hand, Harun al-Rashid did not take any action against Imam Al-Rida (‘a) as he was observing that Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had no interest in political areas.

Harun's departure to the city of Ray in 189 A.H. and then to Khurasan

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2, 2:246; **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:974-975; **Nur al-Absar**, p. 243; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:255.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:213; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:114.

in 192 A.H. and finally his death in 193 A.H. were some of the other elements ofrelative freedom for Imam Al-Rida (‘a).[1]

1. **Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:191, 207 and 211; **Al-Bidayah wa’l-Nihayah**, 10:217, 224 and 231.

CHAPTER TWO
DEVIATIONS IN THE TIME OF IMAM AL–RIDA (AS)

In this chapter, we will consider different deviations in the time of Abbasid dynasty and the time of Harun and his son Muhammad (who was killed by his brother Al-Ma'mun in 198 A.H.); from 183 to 198 A.H. in all. Imam Al-Rida's ('a) role in the removal of these deviations and moving society from these difficulties is another discussion which will be considered later. Here we will briefly discuss the deviations of these eras:

Intellectual Deviations

In the time of Abbasids, many intellectual events occurred earning for themselves some followers. In those days, dialectics and amphiboly were so important that the entire Islamic Ummah was interested in them. The Abbasid rulers encouraged and protected the men taking part in these discussions, because in this manner the Islamic Ummah's attention would be drawn to these matters and they could not think of the matters taking place politically, economically and in other fields of their lives.

Meanwhile the followers of other religions such as Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Sabaeans, Brahmans, atheists, materialists and others also had the chance to present their ideas, thoughts and beliefs without fear of persecution.

With the increasing number of founders of different faiths and creeds, the number of Islamic creeds was also increasing. Pure intellectual thoughts and ideal philosophy[1] also spread widely. During this age

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1. The followers of this philosophy denied any kind of reality for these things and believed that everything is only imagination. According to them, knowledge is a production of one's imagination. See: "al-munjid" the word: "mithl".

some political movements such as Zaydis and Isma'ilis emerged, based on armed jihad against the government as their only motive; also it had changed into a doctrinal and religious event. Some false claims also came into being. For example, a misled person appeared on the scene claiming to be the ProphetIbrahim. One thing is certain: these events took place because the Abbasid rulers had provided them protection. Also, they were biased in their favour to an unfair extent. As a result, Islamic society went astray and was led from the right path which is only the path of the Household (‘a).

On the other hand, the rulers fabricated views and theories or accepted one of the creeds. Then they preached among the Muslims and called them to their creed and faith so that in this way they could create a kind of dispute among the Muslims. They either put those opposing their faith in jail or killed them, although accepting or rejecting their faith did not have any direct affect on the religious beliefs of the people. For example, Harun al-Rashid accepted the theory of ‘non–creation of the holy Book’ and started killing those who were against this. Once, a dead body of a person killed by executioners was lying in front of him. When the people asked Harun about it he said: “I killed him because he was saying that the Qur'an had been created.”[1]

In the time of Al-Ma’mun, the situation completely changed. He did not choose the path of his father and said that the holy Book of Allah had neither been “created” nor was it “uncreatable”. Now, it was Al-Ma’mun who made the topic on the holy Book of Allah a test for the intellectuals of his time.[2]

Harun was in favour of fabricated narrations and Hadiths which were related to the Prophet of Allah (s), especially those ones whose superstition was manifest. He killed people who were against such narrations and Hadiths. The best example of this is the following story:

One day Abu Mu’awiya met Harun al-Rashid. A noble person from

1. **Al-Bidayah wa’l-Nihayah**, 10:234.
2. **Tarikh al-Tabari**, 7:188-197; **Al-Bidayah wa’l-Nihayah**, 10, p 289; **Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:408-423.

among the Qurayshids was also present in the court. Discussion started and Abu Mu'awiyah narrated a Hadith from Abu Huraira who had related it to the Prophet of Allah (s). This tradition is full of superstitions. The Hadith said: "One day Musa ('a) met Adam ('a) and said to him: 'Are you our father who disappointed us and turned us out of paradise?"

Suddenly the man sitting there said with astonishment: "Where did Adam and Musa ('a) meet with each other?"

This slight criticism made Harun very angry. He said: "Bring me the nat' (a leather cloth on which a criminal is beheaded) and sword. By God he is pagan who has criticized the Hadith of the Prophet of Allah ('a)."

Abu Mu'awiya, trying to save the life of the man as well as trying to make Harun calm down, said: "O commander of the faithful! He said it by mistake and did not know." By saying these words, he was successful in pacifying Harun and Harun changed his mind about killing the man."[1]

Harun al-Rashid showed great respect for those intellectuals who acted according to his wishes. On the other hand, he put down the great Imams ('a) and intellectuals belonging to the Household of the Prophet ('a) who did not accord him his wishes. The following story will serve as an excellent example of Harun's respect for his favourite scholars and intellectuals:

Once, Harun was pouring water on the hands of Abu Mu'awiyah. While doing so, he said to Abu Mu'awiyah:

"Do you know who is pouring water on your hands?"

Abu Mu'awiyah was blind and did not know. He replied: "No."

Harun said: "It is me pouring water on your hands."

Abu Mu'awiyah said: "Is it you, o commander of the faithful?"

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1. **Tarikh Baghdad**, 14:8; **Sayr A'alam al-Nubala'**, 9:288.

Harun said: "Yes. And this is for respecting knowledge."[1]

Harun always protected the thoughts and beliefs which made his government stronger. One of the poets, who had sold his hereafter for this world, recited four verses for Harun in which he mentioned him under the title of "Ameen Allah". Harun ordered him to be given one thousand dinars for every verse. Then he said to the man: "Certainly if you added more [to your verses], we would also have added [to your rewards].[2]

The great rewards of Harun made the poets praise the Abbasids and their government, and it was only for monetary gain. These poets recited verses about the legality of the Abbasid dynasty. One of these poets recited of Harun:

"Friendship of the caliph is not something which can be accepted by those who have denied the commands of Allah, left their religion and spread corruption."[3]

Another poet named Salm Khasir[4] recited some verses in which he praised Ameen and Harun, saying:

"The jinnis and human beings have been guided by the mehdi and have pledged their allegiance to Muhammad, the son of "Zubayda ibn Ja'far";

Allah made the caliph successful for developing the family of the caliphate for the noble people."[5]

Zubayda, the wife of Harun, gave the poet a pearl for these verses which he sold for twenty thousand dinars.[6]

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1. **Tarikh Baghdad**, 14:9; **Sayr A'alam a-Nubala'**, 9:188.
2. **Muruj al-Thahab**, 3:399.
3. **Tarikh al-Khulafa'**, p. 249; **Samat al-Nujom al-'Awali**, 3:428.
4. Salm ibn Umro ibn Ammar was one of the famous tactful poets. He sold his Holy Qur'an and bought a tambourine with the proceeds. That is why he is called "Khasir" (loser). Refer to: Khayr al-Din Zarkali, **al-Ailam**, 3:111.
5. Arabic verses.
6. **Tarikh al-Khulafa**, p. 249; **Ansab al-Sam'ani**, 2:308-309.

By putting under pressure those intellectuals and scholars who had in their hearts a love for the Household (‘a) and by protecting and encouraging the events ruining the intellectual and doctrinal atmosphere, the Abbasid caliphs actually wanted to drag the people and Islamic society away from the path of the Household (‘a). Certainly this is not without evidence. We can see that the Abbasid caliphs did not pressurize the people in spreading their different ideas and theories and it is evidence for what has been said above.

The Abbasid government did not stop or remove the event of “waqifids” and “gulat” from happening at first because these two groups had emerged from Shi'isbeing supported by the caliphs to defame Shiism and the path of the Household (‘a).

Al-Ma’mun, supposedly to propagate and enhance culture but in fact to develop different schools of thoughts against the Household’s (‘a) school of thought, commanded Greek philosophical works to be translated into Arabic.[1] Clearly this was something resulting in the intellectual spread of ideas, logic terminology and unrealistic assumptions which the caliphs wanted.

During the time of the Abbasid caliphs, fatwas based on one's own assumption and interpretation of assumptions became famous. Also the false “qiyas” which was on the basis of another “qiyas”, became famous. Muftis gave their fatwas keeping in mind the caliphs' intentions and desires. Ibn Mubarak narrated: “When Harun al–Rashid became caliph, he was very fond of one of his father’s bondmaids. He tried to sleep with her, but she said to him: “I am not fit for you [and it is not permissible for you to sleep with me], because your father has slept with me.” However, he was very fond of her. He sent for his famous judge, Abu Yousuf, and asked him: “What is your fatwa in this regard?” The judge replied saying: “O commander of the faithful! What is said by the bondmaid is not always right. Do not accept what she said because she is not [honest and] trustworthy.”

Ibn Mubarak then said: “I do not know about which of the affairs I must be most astonished! Should I be astonished because the caliph

1. **Ma'atiar al-Anafa fi Ma'alim al-khulafa**, 1:209.

thinks he has the authority of the lives and properties of the Muslims but on the other hand cannot stop himself from breaking the respect of his father's household; or should I be surprised about the bondmaid who refrains from the commander of the faithful, or should I be stunned to see how "the jurisprudent of the earth and its judge" says: "violate the inviolability of your father and satisfy your lust, and make it (the responsibility of sin) on my neck."[1]

Abdullah ibn Yousuf narrated: "Harun al-Rashid said to Abu Yousuf: I have bought a bondmaid and I want to sleep with her before her Istibra (verification of non–pregnancy). Is there any solution for this matter?"

Abu Yousuf said: "Yes. Give her to one of your sons and then marry her."[2]

In this manner some of the jurisprudents –who had sold their souls against this the world and mundane desires– were giving fatwas in favour of the caliphs and justifying the fulfillment of their lust and desires. With their false fatwas, they smoothed the way for the caliphs to do whatever they wanted. On the other hand, we can see that the jurisprudents who followed the path of the Household ('a) also opposed them. Therefore, they were always under extreme observation.

The scholars and intellectuals of the court did not cease playing their role and continually spread the concepts of piety and Sufism in their opposite meaning to drag the Muslims away from interfering or complaining about the positioning and political situation of the caliphs and kings.

In the end, they were successful in their sincere efforts and the people remained alone and were dragged away from their lives in such a manner that even they were left to act according to their responsibility to promote good and prohibit evil.

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1. **Tarikh al-Khulafa**, p. 249
2. Ibid.

The Caliphs and Wastefulness of the Treasury

The Abbasid caliphs neglected the economic Islamic rules according to which the caliphs were only the protectors of the treasury and did not own it, andthere were certain religious boundaries for them to observe. They usurped the collective property of the Muslims –the treasure house– and wasted its money on the fulfillment of their own desires. To strengthen their government, they gave large amounts of money to certain individuals and asked them to be on their side. Singers, bondmaids and flatterers were given great sums from the treasury.

The story told by Abul Faraj Isfahani can be presented as a good example of this:

"A large amount of tax and other property came from Mosul for Harun al-Rashid. Harun ordered it to be given to one of his bondmaids. People started talking about this issue as they thought it was an unnatural step for him to take.

Abul Atahiya said: "[how surprising!] How can Harun give such a large amount to a woman while I do not have any share in it?' He entered the court of Harun and recited some verses for him. Harun gave him twenty thousand dirhams. Fadl ibn Rabi', who was also present, added another five thousand dirhams."[1]

Ibrahim ibn Mahdi was another person enjoying a good share from the stolen war booty – the treasure house which was now in the hands of the Abbasid caliphs. He sang a song for Harun al-Rashid and received a reward of one million dirhams.[2]

Once, Harun al-Rashid bought a bondmaid for seventy thousand dirhams and gave her a pearl worth twelve thousand dinars. Moreover, he swore that he would buy anything the bondmaid desired.[3]

In contrast to such extravagance, the overwhelming majority of Islamic society led a life of misery and deprivation, for it suffered

1. **Al-Aghani**, 4:305.
2. **Al-Aghani**, 3:311.
3. **Al-Aghani**, 16:497.

terrible poverty and wretchedness. Pointing to their poverty, two people from Quraish said to Harun: "Calamities have ruined us and the difficulties of our lives have snatched our property from our palms."[1]

This was the condition of the common people in the time of the Abbasid kings. On the other hand, the officials and relatives of the caliphs enjoyed great rewards. This went on to such an extent that the property of Harun's governor in Khurasanexceeded eighty million.[2]

The amount of property which Harun left behind was unimaginable. He left behind one hundred million dinars in money and other goods such as jewelry and camels, worth one hundred million and fifty thousand dinars in all.[3]

Harun's sons continued the method of their father in spoliation of the Muslims' properties. Muhammad al-Ameen erected a building and carpeted it with carpets made of golden and silk threads.[4]

He completely ignored the misery and deprivation of the Muslims and enjoyed their treasury according to his own wishes. One day a small fish was caught for him. He put rings in it which were inlayed with pearls.[5] He wasted the property of the Muslims for his, his companions' and eunuchs' pleasure.[6]

Al-Ma'mun also followed the same way and spent a great amount of money on his marriage ceremony. Moreover, he ordered his father–in–law to be given a year's worth of taxes from Fars and Ahwaz.[7]

The relatives of the governor of Baghdad were also using the property

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1. **Al-Aghani**, 16:440-441.
2. **Tarikh al-Tabari**, 8:512; **Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah**, 3, p 222; **Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6. 204.
3. **Tarikh al-Khulafa'**, p. 249; **Al-Thababi Tarikh al-Islam**, deaths (191-200 H).
4. **Morouj al-Thahab**, 3:428
5. Ibid, 3:430.
6. **Tarikh al-Tabari**, 7:101-102; **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:293-294.
7. **Morouj al-Thahab**, 3:443; **Wafiyat al-Ayaan**, 1:288-289; **Al-Wafi bil Wafiyat**, 10:200.

of the Muslims –the treasury– and nobody dared to stop them.[1]

The above are only a few examples of the injustice, spoliation and plunder.

Ethical Perversion

An extraordinary love of welfare and aristocracy played a very important role in the ethical perversion of the caliphs and their officials. The rulers were always busy in entertainment to fulfill their sensual desires. Harun also added more entertainments and games which had not been played by the caliphs before him. He introduced games such as polo, marbles, and archery during horse riding. Harun was also the first of the Abbasid kings to play chess.[2]

Harun was very fond of singing. Therefore, he classified the singers into different categories [and paid them according to their musicality.][3]

Harun al-Rashid fell in love with three singers from among his female slaves and concerning them he composed poetry including the following lines:

"The three young ladies have taken my rein and occupied the dearest place in my heart.

Why do all people obey me and I obey them, while they disobey me?

That is (nothing) except the power of love through which they overcame those who were powerful than me."[4]

On one hand, there were thousands of soldiers fighting against the enemies, dying and giving their blood to save the borders of the Islamic country; and on the other hand, there was Harun al-Rashid who showed not the slightest grief nor sorrow for the soldiers losing their lives. However, when he was informed of the death of one of his

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1. **Tarikh Tabari**, 8:551; **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:324-325.
2. **Tarikh al-Khulafa**, p. 249; **Al-Thababi Tarikh al-Islam**, p. 19.
3. **Tarikh al-Khulafa**, p. 237.
4. **Tarikh Baghdad**, 4:12; **Al-Wafi bil Wafiyat**, 19:365; **Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah**, 10:238.

slave–girls, Haylina, he was very sorry to hear the news and composed a poem including these lines:

'The criers must weep in her mourning; and mourning for her, the eulogies must burn down hearts.

In passing away, she left behind endless grief for me; and she has left the grief for me as inheritance."[1]

Harun was an alcoholic and loved drinking wine. That is why sometimes he would pour the wine into glasses and present them to his companions.

Holding amusing parties was also on Harun's entertainment programme. For this reason he chose Ibn Abi Maryam Madani. Harun could not tolerate his being away from him, neither did he become angry when finding him talking nonsense to him. His interest in Ibn Abi Maryam was so strong that he made him a house in his own palace and treated him as his other family members, companions and slaves.[2]

Harun did not become angry at his parliament using vulgar and immodest words [but rather he considered them funny]. One day Abbas ibn Muhammad presented Harun with a decorative pot containing musk and ambergris. Harun gave it to Ibn Abi Maryam. Abbas became angry and said to Ibn Abi Maryam: "His mother is a bitch if he uses the stuff on any part of his body other than his rectum.

Harun laughed on hearing Abbas' words. Ibn Maryam dipped his hand into the pottery cup and rubbed his hand on his private parts. Then he gave his slave the cup and ordered him to take it to his wife and [as said by Ibn Abi Maryam] said to her: rub the stuff of the cup onto your private parts so that I will come and …. you."

Harun laughed heartily on hearing these vulgar immodest words, and [to reward Ibn Maryam's 'humorous expressions'] he gave him

1. **Fawat al-Wafiyat**, 2:571; **Al-Wafi bil Wafiyat**, 27:119.
2. **Al-Aghani**, 5:196-197.

hundred thousand dirhams."[1]

When Muhammad al-Ameen became caliph, he bought many eunuchs and exceeded in their friendship and praise. He made them the friends of his leisure, and fixed salaries for them. He sent his men to different cities to collect comediansand actors. Then he added them to his parliament and fixed a monthly salary for them. [After provided such a group of friends] he became distant from his brothers and family members and degraded them as well as the commanders of his army. He distributed among his friends the jewelry which was in the treasure house as well as that which he had himself and ordered special receptacles to be built for more. As commanded by Muhammad al-Ameen, five ships were made in the form of lions, elephants, eagles, snakes and horses which were all put in the River Tigris. He spent a great amount of money on these ships.[2]

As commanded by al-Ameen, extravagant carpets were spread in an open area, and gold and silver drinking vessels were provided for drinking wine along with different kinds of jewels. Then al-Ameen ordered the guardian of his slave–girls to choose one hundred singers and performers from among them and send them in groups of ten with lutes in their hands to sing before the caliph.[3]

When in Khurasan , the name of al-Ameen was mentioned in the presence of Fadl ibn Sahl; he said: "Why should he not be killed, when the poets recite verses in his presence saying:

"Yes, pass me the cup of wine and while doing so tell me: this is wine [so that its test becomes double by hearing its beautiful name.]

And if it is not possible to fill the cups in public, fill them and pass them to me in secret."[4]

Ibn Athir introduces al-Ameen with the following words: "We found nothing noteworthy in his conduct such as tolerance, justice and

1. **Tarikh Tabari**, 6:531; **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6, p. 217; **Tarikhal-Islam**, p. 15.
2. **Tarikh Tabari**, 6:531-532.
3. **Tarikh Tabari**, 7:101-102; **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:293-294.
4. **Tarikh Tabari**, 7:105; **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:295.

experience [in governmental matters]."[1]

Abdullah Al-Ma'mun also followed his father and brother's style in this regard. "Ishaq ibn Ibrahim ibn Maymun" says: "No–one could be found more fond of women than Al-Ma'mun."[2]

He joined his friends in their drinking parties and drank until he became unconscious.[3]

Also many narrations say: "Al-Ma'mun was an alcoholic."[4]

Al-Ma'mun spent his nights in the company of slave–girl singers, drinking wine till morning. One night, Muhammad ibn Hamid was standing beside Al-Ma'mun while he was drinking wine. Suddenly, Areeb started singing a song. Al-Ma'mun was surprised to find that Areeb had started singing. Muhammad ibn Hamid understood the condition of Al-Ma'mun and said to him: "O my master! I compelled him to sing with a kiss.

Al-Ma'mun said to him: 'Thus I marry my slave–girl Areeb to Muhammad ibn Hamid against four hundred dirhams as her dowry'. And Areeb sang for Al-Ma'mun till dawn while Muhammad ibn Hamid remained standing at the door of the house [of Al-Ma'mun].[5]

Ethical perversion was not only observed in the rulers but also among the judges and lawyers. A judge in the time of al-Ameen and Al-Ma'mun was found guilty of sodomy and was not willing to abandon his bad habit. He was notorious for it. When the people complained about him in front of Al-Ma'mun, he said: 'It would be much better if you had complained about him before he was appointed to his post!'

However, Muhammad al-Ameen made him resign from his post and join the company of the caliph (i.e. al-Ameen). Having joined his

1. **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:295.
2. **Al-'Iqd al-Farid**, 8:156.
3. **Tarikh Tabari**, 7:219; **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:437.
4. **Tarikh Tabari**, 7:157; **Tarikh al-Khulafa**, 275; **Al-Wafi bil Wafiyat**, 17, 353.
5. **Tarikh al-Khulafa**, p. 275; **Al-Aghani**, 21:49, 50 and 51.

company, the person got more authority to carry out his evil deeds."[1]

Moral perversion was common among the relatives of and the people close to the caliphs and other officials. Towards the beginning of Al-Ma'mun's government, some of the policemen in Baghdad and Karkh publicly committed crimes and were involved in all sorts of corruption. They were bandits and kidnapped young boys and girls in full view of the people. Moreover, they went to the villages in groups and looted whatever they wanted. Also they beat the people badly and no one dared to stop them as they were very close to the sultan (the caliph), and they were the men in power.

With a little consideration of history, we find that the ignorance which was once removed by the Prophet (s) was revived during the age of those claiming to be his successors. This ignorance was so predominant that the rulers and caliphs, whose duty it was to be the protectors of the people's lives and property, were themselves looting their property and ruining the lives of the real owners. Moreover, the judges and lawyers whose job was to stop the people from ethical perversions were themselves breaking the law and had involved themselves in all kinds of corruption for which they were rewarded by the caliphs and rulers. All this corruption occurred under the protection of "the caliph of God" – as they thought.[2]

Political Perversion

Another problem dominating the time of Imam Al-Rida ('a) was political perversion. This crisis can be understood in the following:

1.The Political Situation in Harun's Time

In the first ten years of his Imamah (from 183 to 193A.H.), Imam Al-Rida ('a) was the contemporary of Harun al-Rashid. There was no difference between Harun's hostile politics and the politics of the caliphs before him. He also used the same politics against Imam Kadhim ('a). Since he had martyred Imam Kadhim ('a), he was very afraid. He feared that those associated with the Household ('a) might

1. **Morouj al-Thahab**, 4:26-27; 6:152-155.
2. **Tarikh Tabari**, 1:136; **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:324-325.

declare a revolt against him. To avoid every kind of accusation he summoned leaders, notable persons, judges and the people of the family of Hashim, removed the shroud from Imam Kadhim's (‘a) face and said to them: "Do you see any mark on him which you regard as abominable?"[1]

These political conditions were not in Harun's favour; therefore, he was compelled to avoid taking any direct action against Imam Al-Rida (‘a) as he had against his father, Imam Musa Kadhim (‘a). He did not accept the suggestions of his family and friends who tried to provoke him against Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and asked the caliph to kill him (‘a). However, we also must keep in mind that Imam Al-Rida (‘a) chose a special method for his politics and political activities that was successful in disarming Harun and did not give him any excuse to take action against the Imam (‘a). Moreover, the reports and pieces of information given by Harun's agents did not show any noticeable political activity on the part of the Imam (‘a). Therefore, Harun's government, as compared with the caliphs', was more peaceful towards Imam Al-Rida (‘a). Still his government can be defined as having the following characteristics:

Like other caliphs of the family of Umayyad and Abbasid, Harun al-Rashid was not chosen on the basis of the Prophet's (s) testament; neither was he chosen by the Muslims or "people of loosing and binding", which was common then and would enable them to appoint or retire someone from his post; but rather he had taken the post of caliphate through crown succession ordered by the ex–caliph. This compelled him to consolidate his government by any possible means.

Therefore Harun used the two methods of terror and bribery to strengthen his government. He did not compromise regarding any peaceful complaints and did not listen to any suggestions regarding promoting good and prohibiting evil. Once, he was delivering a sermon when suddenly a person stood in the audience and recited a verse from the holy Qur'an saying:

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1. **Tarikh al-Ya'qubi**, 2:414; **Maqatil al-Talibin**, p. 336.

﴿كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَن تَقُولُواْ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾

"It is greatly outrageous to Allah that you should say what you do not do."[1]

Harun, who could not think of what to say against the person, ordered him to be whipped a hundred times.[2]

In 188 A.H. Harun al-Rashid arrested a companion of Ahmad ibn Isa Alawi and whipped him so badly that he died. The only crime of that old man – who was more than ninety years old – was to refuse to tell anything to Harun regarding where "Ahmad ibn Isa Alawi" had hidden.[3]

Among the examples of how Harun treated his rivals was his behavior towards Yahya ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hassan ibn al-Hassan. Harun prosecuted him and then guaranteed his life. When Yahya was taken in front of Harun, he put him in jail to die there. According to another tradition, Harun's jailer did not give him food for some days and he died of hunger.[4]

Also when Harun was in Toos, Hameed ibn Qahtaba Ta'ikilled sixty people of the Alawi family and then threw their dead bodies in a well, as commanded by Harun.[5]

An important point is that although Harun kept terrifying, threatening and killing the Alawides, he did not decide to kill Imam Al-Rida (‘a). He only thought it was enough to threaten and make some special plans to kill the Imam (‘a), though he did not seriously intend to kill him. Once, he said of his decision about the Imam (‘a): "This year I will go to Makkah; I will catch Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) and will send him to where his father is (i.e. I will kill him).'

When the Imam (‘a) was informed about Harun's decision, he said:

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1. *Surat al Saf, 61:3*.
2. **Al-‘Iqd al-Farid**, 1:51.
3. **Tarikh al-Ya’qubi**, 2:423; **Al-Aghani**, 4:322-323.
4. **Tarikh al-Ya’qubi**, 2:408.
5. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:100-101; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:176-178.

"He will not harm me."[1]

Once when Imam Al-Rida ('a) was summoned by Harun, he said to his companions: "He [Harun] has summoned me for execution [of his evil intention] and calamities, [but] by God, he cannot do anything against me which I do not wish."

When the Imam ('a) arrived before Harun, Harun respected him and asked him to write down the requirements and needs of his family [and give it to the caliph]. When he was leaving Harun's palace, Harun said to him: "I wanted [to do something] and Allah wanted [something else to happen] and what Allah wanted was good."[2]

Imam Al-Rida ('a) was always under observation from Harun's spies and agents who kept informing Harun about the Imam's ('a) sayings, behaviour and meetings with the people. Therefore, the Imam ('a) was very cautious in his activities so that Harun did not feel threatened by him.

FirstlyDictatorship

Harun al-Rashid changed the caliphate and government so they became his property which he distributed among his three sons. Although he did not think of Muhammad(al-Ameen) as qualified for the post of caliphate, he chose him and preferred him to his other two sons just because of Zubayda's (the mother of Amin) propitiation and willingness. To confess that Muhammad was not qualified for the post, he explained his decision saying: "I preferred Muhammad… I know very well that he will only follow his sensual desires and will waste whatever he has and [I know that] he interferes with the ideas of slave–girls [into governmental issues]. If it was not for Umm Ja'far (Zubayda) and if Bani Hashim was not interested in him, I would have preferred Abdullah (Al-Ma'mun)."[3]

Harun chose al-Ameen for the post of caliphate only because of

1. **Ithbat al-Wasiyyah**, p. 205.
2. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:116; Mouhaj al-Da'awat.
3. **Tarikh al-Islam al-Thahab**, p. 211-220; **Tarikh al-Khulafa'**, p. 268; Tarikh al-Khamis,

Zubayda's wanting him to become the caliph. He did not think of the consequences and the great events which were about to happen as a result of rivalry and competition between Al-Ma'mun and al-Ameen. In fact, it was something which never worried Harun. As a result of this inauspicious selection and the competition taking place between the two brothers for the post of caliphate, the blood of thousands of the Muslims was shed in deadly battles and their property left their hands.

Harun's cruel actions included distributing all governmental and military posts among his own relatives, friends and ingratiating acquaintances. According to him, these qualities were enough for proving oneself able to bear governmental responsibility; and religious, moral and management qualities meant nothing to him.

Secondly Foreign threats

According to historical accounts, the Islamic government had always been threatened by foreign enemies. In the initial years of Imam Al-Rida's ('a) Imamah, Khazran attacked the Muslim territory and the blood of thousands was shed. He also made one hundred thousand Muslim men and women his captives. The historians wrote of this event: "A great disaster happened to Islam which was incomparable to any previous disaster."[1]

On the other hand, the Romans were waiting for a chance to attack the Muslims; they would neglect the peace treaty and after the war was finished would write a new one. It is worth mentioning that the Muslim rulers' attacks were not for propagation of Islamic principles nor for enhancing the borders of Islamic countries; they were rather to protect their own inclination of domination over others' lands and to bring more and more people under the yoke of their bondage. Another target of the rulers from such wars was to involve the Muslims in battles and stop them interfering in political affairs as well as declaring revolts against the rulers. Harun's conduct and evening feasts can be mentioned as a great example of what we said above,

1. **Tarikh Tabari**, 6:471; al- Thahabi, **Tarikh al-Islam**, the events from 181 A. H. to 191 A. H. pp. 11-12;**Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:163.

because if he cared for Muslims he would never have held such evenings and would not have spent his time in the company of slave–girls.

Harun's erroneous politics made the internal front confusing and disorganized. In 184 A.H. the revolt of Abu Umro Hamza Shari took place which continued till 185 A.H. After having killed ten thousand companions and the army of Abu Hamza, Harun was successful in overcoming this revolt. In the same year, the people of Tabaristan killed the governor who had been appointed by Harun.

The revolt of Abul Khaseeb was another important event of the year. He was successful in bringing the cities of Nisa, Abiward, Toos and Nishabour under his control. Then he moved on towards Marwand Sarakhs. This revolt ended in 186 A.H. after the bloodshed of thousands of soldiers of both sides.[1]

187 A.H. was the year of cracks in the internal front because during this year Harun al-Rashid killed the Bramikas who were the members and founders of his government[2] and who had played a vital role in the suppression of the enemies of Abbasid caliphs.

In the same year, he imprisoned Harun ibn Abdul Malik ibn Saleh ibn Ali Abbasi because his son had spoken against him saying that he wanted to snatch the government from Harun and claiming he should be the caliph.[3]

Ibrahim ibn Uthman ibn Naheek, who declared revolt as vengeance for the bloodshed of Bramika, was killed by Harun in the same year.[4]

189 A.H. was the year of Harun's journey to Khurasan, because he was informed that Ali ibn Isa ibn Mahan, the governor of Khurasan, had declared revolt against him. On the other hand, Harun's

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1. **Tarikh Tabari**, 6:472-473; **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:168-172.
2. **Tarikh Tabari**, 6:484; **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:174; **Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah**, 10:204.
3. **Tarikh Tabari**, 6:496-497; **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:180; **Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah**, 10:209.
4. **Tarikh Tabari**, 6:305; **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:186; **Tarikh al Islam al-Thahab**, p. 36.

connection with the people of Khurasanhad been severed, [and it was important for him to go and meet the people of that place. After four months, he returned to Baghdad while the governor of Khurasanwas still in his post.[1]

These erroneous politics of Harun's became the cause for his relation with the people to be weakened day by day and the people started hating him. When Harun al-Rashid passed Fadhil ibn Ayaz in Makkah, Fadhil said: "The people dislike this [man] and run away from him."[2]

In short, the political conditions faced by Harun did not let him make any decision regarding killing Imam Al-Rida ('a) because not much time had not passed since he had killed his father ('a) in prison. On the other hand, in the time of Imam Al-Rida ('a), there were no Alawide revolts, because if there had been Imam Al-Rida ('a) would undoubtedly have been blamed for them. During this period, Imam Al-Rida's ('a) efforts were to make others understand the meaning of peaceful politics.

2. The Political Conditions in the Time of Muhammad(al-Ameen)

Imam Al-Rida ('a) passed five years of his Imamah (193 A.H. to 198 A.H.) as a contemporary of Muhammad al-Ameen. In this period Muhammad al-Ameen did not take any action against Imam Al-Rida ('a) in particular and against Alawides in general; neither did he try to kill him or any other Alawides. Historians do not mention even a word regarding such a decision. However, one can easily imagine that the conditions in which Muhammad al-Ameen was living did not allow him to make such decisions. Towards the beginning of his caliphate, he had to face some challenges and disputes with his brother Abdullah which ended in the division of the Islamic lands into two parts. Each of the two brothers ruled a certain part of the Islamic world with their own administrative and military organizations as well as their companions, followers and properties.

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1. **Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:191; **Tarikh Tabari**, 6:505-507.
2. **Tarikh Baghdad**, pp. 12-14; **Sirat A'alam al-Nubala'**, 9:289.

In 194 A.H. the people of Hims revolted against Muhammad al-Ameen. Al-Ameen's army commander was successful in suppressing this revolt after having the heads of the Hims killed, putting the other people in jail and burning down their homes. In short, Al-Ameen overcame this revolt after having killed most of the people of Hims and ruining their economy.

In the same year, al-Ameen asked the preachers to preach for his son's succession to the crown in pulpits and minbars. Then he asked Al-Ma'mun to accept Musa as crown prince, but Al-Ma'mun rejected his offer.

In 195 A.H. al-Ameen sent an army to Khurasan declaring war against him. However, his army was defeated. Al-Ameenkept attacking Khurasantill 197 A.H. but his army could never take control of Khurasan and was defeated every time. On the other hand, Al-Ma'mun's army followed al-Ameen's defeated army till Baghdad and blockaded the city for one year.

In 198 A.H. after a deadly war in which thousands of people were killed on both sides, Al-Ma'mun's army became victorious and killed al-Ameen and his companions. Now Al-Ma'mun was the only ruler of the Islamic world.[1]

These conditions had snatched the opportunity from the government and the rulers of keeping Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and other Alawides under observation. On the other hand, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) took advantage of this opportunity and worked on the following affairs:

1.Improving society and purifying them from chaos, disorder and corruption at every level possible;
2.Trying to spread Shiism among the people;
3.Propagating correct ideas and thoughts among them.

During this period, Alawides reformed their military structure to be able to be prepared to enter the new stages which were yet to come, as well as to be able to be victorious against the conditions which the rulers and Islamic Ummah were going to experience in the near future.

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1. **Al-kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:222 to 282; **Tarikh Tabari**, 6:544-552 and 7:49-76.

CHAPTER THREE
IMAM AL–RIDA'S (AS) ROLE BEFORE HIS SUCCESSION TO THE CROWN

Imam Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) was the centre of attraction for jurisprudents and those in search of knowledge and wisdom. He himself witnessed his high position, saying: “I was attending the mourning ceremony of my ancestor, the Holy Prophet (s) in Madinah. When one of them couldnot find a solution for a question, they all addressed those questions to me and Iwas answering their questions.”[1]

The Imam (‘a) told his companions to judge the level of understanding of the people and then make them aware of doctrinal problems according to their mental level. Once, he said to Muhammad ibn Ubayd: “Tell Abbasi: stop discussing the oneness of Allah and other such discussions. Talk to the people about what they know [and what they can understand] and do not speak to them of a thing which they do not understand.”[2]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and the Intellectual and Religious Reforms

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) revealed the hypocrisy which was planned by the enemies for the disorder of the wisdom and beliefs of the Muslims. He informed his followers about the method of the enemies of Islam which they had been using for breaking up Islamic thoughts and beliefs. The Imam (‘a) said: “Our enemies and opponents have fabricated three kinds of traditions and narrations about our virtues: exaggerating about us, neglecting our affairs [of our Imamah] and abusing our enemies in public. Therefore, whenever people hear something exaggerated about us, they will excommunicate our

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1. **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:64; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:111; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:100.
2. **Al-Tawhid**, p. 95; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 2:69 and 3:221.

Shi'ahis and will accuse them of believing in our godliness; and when they find faults, they will relate those faults to us; and when they hear our enemies being abused clearly with names pronounced, they will mention us in bad words."[1]

To face such intellectual and doctrinal disorder, Imam (‘a) introduced some methods which were as follows:

1. Constructively Responding to Intellectual Deviation

To neutralize the influence of deviated schools, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) took some very useful steps. Keeping in mind all aspects of deviation along with the deviated ones, the Imam (‘a) sometimes criticized these actions and on some other occasions he criticized the people committing such deviations. He also made these people known to the Muslims and in this way enlightened their minds. One of these deviated topics which came into being and was becoming famous very rapidly in those days was the issue of "Mushabbah" (anthropomorphism) in which Allah was compared with material things. This issue had attracted the minds of many people in those days.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a), rejecting their ideas and thoughts in this regard, said: "O Lord! Your power appeared without any fault and weakness in it; but [they] were ignorant about You and glorified You [according to their own mental level] and [not in the way which You deserve to be glorified] they described you in a way which does not suit Your glory. Thus, O my Lord! I am fed up with them who are looking for You in the form of a creature; [because] there is nothing like You!"[2]

Likewise, the Imam (‘a) said of the fatalists and delegationists:

"Whosoever claims that Allah performs our deeds and then punishes us for [our involuntary] actions, believes in fatalism; and whosoever says: Allah the Honorable the Exalted has handed over the affair of

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:272; **Bisharat al-Moustafa**, p. 340; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 26:239.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:107; **al-Tawhid**, pp. 124-125; **al- Amali al-Saduq**, p. 707.

creation and distribution of sustenance to His Proofs –peace be upon them– believes in "delegation". Thus [he must know it that] he who believes in fatalism is an infidel and he who believes in delegation is a dualist."[1]

Imam Al-Rida ('a) rejected the groups of Ghalis, Mujassima and the people of Qiyas and "subjective interpreters of Qur'anic texts" along with their false theories and ideas. He also rejected non–Islamic groups such as irreligious people, Jews and Christians.

Moreover, he rejected all those traditions relied on by deviated people. He spread the falsehood of such traditions which people tried to relate to the Prophet of Allah (s). The Imam ('a) made the Muslims aware of true and fabricated traditions and narrations. A tradition was related to the Prophet of Allah (s) and Islam which said: "Allah the Honorable the Exalted comes onto the worldly sky every Thursday night."

Imam Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida ('a) rejecting this tradition said: "May God curse those who distort the words of others; By God! The Holy Prophet (s) did not say it, rather he said: In the last third of every night and on F Al-Riday night, from its beginning, God sends an angel to the sky of this world calling: is there anyone who calls upon Me so that I shall grant his request? Is there anyone who repents so that I shall accept his repentance? Is there anyone asking forgiveness so that I shall forgive him? This was polyquoted by my father, his father and the Holy Prophet (s)."[2]

Imam Al-Rida ('a) did not think it enough but he asked the faithful ones to cut their relation with the deviated people like fatalists, mufawwiza and the extremists so that in this manner the Islamic Ummah could be rescued from the danger of false ideologies and beliefs. Sometimes, he used the Prophet (s) and the Imams' ('a) Hadiths for making his words of guidance reliable and on other occasions he introduced new guidelines.

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 1:114; **Al-Ihtijaj**, 2:198; **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 1:139.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 1:116; **al-Tawhid**, p. 176; **Al-Ihtijaj**, 2:192-193.

There is a tradition in which the Imam (‘a) said: “Whosoever claims that Allah compels His servants to commit sins and compels them to do what they are not fit for, do not eat [the meat of] his sacrificed animals; do not accept his witness, do not make him Imam of your congregational prayers, and do not give him anything from your zakat.”[1]

The Imam (‘a) said of ending one's relation with Ghalis[2]and Mufawidha:

“The Ghalis are unbelievers and those who believe in (God) turning over (all) the affairs (to the Prophet (s)) are polytheists. Whoever associates with them; visits them; eats or drinks with them; becomes related to them; gives a daughter in marriage to or marries one of their daughters; grants them immunity; considers them honest in keeping what they are entrusted with; or acknowledges what they say or assists them in what they say has exited the circle of the Mastery of the Honorable the Exalted God, the Mastery of God’s Prophet (s) and the Mastery of us – the Members of the Holy Household (‘a).”[3]

Another tradition was that in which the Imam (‘a) ordered the Muslims to break their relation with all groups of Ghalis. The Imam (‘a) said: “May God damn the Ghalis. I wish they were Jews! I wish they were Magi! I wish they were Christians! I wish they were of the Qadarites! I wish they were of the Murja'ah! I wish they were of the Harawies!” The Imam (‘a) then added: “Do not associate with or befriends with the Ghalis. Despise them as God has.”[4]

“Waqifite” was another sect towards which Imam Al-Rida (‘a) showed a particular reaction. Here we will discuss briefly how Imam Al-
Rida (‘a) behaved towards this particular sect:

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:113; **Al-Ihtijaj**, 2:197; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 26:273-328.
2. The Ghalis are those who exaggerate the level and status of the infallibles (‘a).
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:219; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 25:273-328.
4. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:218- 219; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 25:273.

"After the martyrdom of Imam Kadhim (‘a), Imam Al-Rida (‘a) asked some of Imam Kadhim's (‘a) administrators to give him the money and other property which they had under their control as administrators of Imam Kadhim (‘a), but they had become greedy and were using the property for their own ends. They said to Imam Al-Rida (‘a): "Your father (‘a) has not died; he is alive and performing the affairs of Imamah. Whosoever considers him dead is certainly wrong [and has said untrue words]."[1]

They started their preaching saying that "Imam Kadhim (‘a) has not died and he is the awaited Imam (‘a)" and were successful in attracting some people's minds towards them. On the other hand, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had to prove the death of his father (‘a) as his first step against this ruining ideology. Therefore, he took some initial steps against this ominous intellectual phenomenon using different methods. It was at a time when the government was taking the side of the Waqifite sect and was encouraging them to spread so that in this manner they could remove every kind of relation among the Shi'is.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was completely aware of the sect of Waqifites and knew them very well. Therefore, he thought it would be best to oppose them in public. That is why he cursed the mentioned sect in the company of his companions and said: "May Allah curse them who have fabricated a white lie."[2]

Then Imam (‘a) prohibited his companions, Shi'i believers and the Muslims from meeting and having relations with Waqifites, so that perhaps they would leave their untrue and false faith and follow the right path once more.

Once Imam (‘a) said to Muhammad ibn Asim: "I have heard that you are associated with Waqifites?"

Muhammad said: "May I be ransom for you! Yes, I am, but I am against them."

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1. **Tusi, al-Ghaybah**, p. 65, *hadith*, 67; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:253.
2. **Rijal Kashi**, 2:759-878; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:265; **Jami'a al-Rowah**, 2:546.

Imam (‘a) said: “Do not sit in their company.”[1]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a), answering the question of one of his followers who had asked about the Waqifites, said: “the Waqifites have deviated from the true religion and persisted in their evil deeds. If they die for it, then their abode is hell; and evil is the resort.”[2]

A Shi'ahi asked Imam Al-Rida (‘a) whether it was permissible for him to pay zakat (alms) to the Waqifites, and he prevented him, saying: “They (the Waqifites) are unbelievers, polytheists, and hypocrites.”[3]

In this manner, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was successful in stopping their influence among his companions and followers of the Household (‘a). However, the men of desire preferred to remain followers of this false ideology and achieve their goals through this medium.

2. Spreading the Correct Ideas

After the Imam (‘a) was successful in blocking the ideas of the deviated people and asking the people to reject them, and after he had asked the Muslims to break their relations with such people and their ideologies, he started propagating intact sound ideas so that in this manner he could achieve this rejection of false ideas completely. The Imam (‘a) included in his propagating and corrective programmes the interpretation of those verses of the holy Qur'an which discuss the principles and foundations of Islamic doctrine. The propagation of narrations and Hadiths, which he had heard from his father, forefathers and the Prophet of Allah (s), was also among Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) programmes. The reason behind this was to give the Muslims' thoughts and beliefs the correct form and shape. For this, the Imam (‘a) missed no chance to explain intact and purified thoughts and correct concepts of the religion of Islam. One of the topics which Imam Al-Rida (‘a) stressed was the issue of the oneness of Allah.

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1. **Rijal Kashi**, 2:757-758, *hadith* no. 864; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:264; **Jami'a al-Rowah**, 2:546.
2. **Rijal Kashi**, 2:756, *hadith* no. 860; **Jami'a al-Rowah**, 2:546; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:263.
3. **Rijal Kashi**, 2:756, *hadith* no. 862; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:263; **Jami'a al-Rowah**, 2:546.

Here we will mention part of the Imam's (‘a) explanation about the oneness of God.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) explained the limits of Oneness of Allah in the following words:

[To bear witness for Oneness of Allah] it is enough for us to say: "There is no god but Allah. He is All–Embracing, He begets not, nor is He begotten; He is Everlasting, All–hearing, All–seeing, All–powerful and the Light. He is All–aware and awareness does not understand Him; He is All–powerful whose power never decreases; He is free from want and never becomes needy of anything; He is just and never does injustice against anyone; He is the originator of all things; nothing resembles Him nor does He resemble anything."[1]

Then Imam Al-Rida (‘a) put the people talking about Oneness of Allah into three categories and said: "The people have three creeds concerning Allah's Oneness: negation, comparison, and establishment without any comparison. The creed of negation is not permissible; the creed of comparison is not permissible, for Allah, the Glorious and Exalted is not likened to anything; and the way is the third creed: establishment without any comparison."[2]

Someone asked the Imam (‘a) about predestination and freewill. He asked: "Does Allah compel human beings to perform deeds which they are not capable of?"

The Imam (‘a) said: "He is more just than that [and will never do such an injustice them].

Then the Imam (‘a) was asked: "Can the servants of Allah do whatever they want?"

The Imam (‘a) replied: "They are weaker than that."[3]

Thus we can see that propagation of Islamic thought is one of the

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1. **Tuhaf al-Uqul**, pp. 415-416; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:129; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 10:352.
2. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 3:263; **al-Tawhid**, p. 107; **Tafsir al-'Ayashi**, 1:365.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:129-130; **Tahthib al-Kamal**, 21:151-152; **Ser A'alam al-Nubala'**, 9:391.

fundamental principles and a useful tool for the intellectual reformation of any society, because it not only removes wrong thoughts, theories and laws but also replaces them with correct and intact thoughts, theories and laws; and it is something for which the great and real reformers have tolerated all kinds of hardship.

3. Referring to the scholars

When the foundation of the Household (‘a) became stronger and more widely spread, it was hard for the followers of the Imam (‘a) to meet him every now and then. In such cases, he asked them to refer to other scholars and intellectuals from amongst his followers. Abdul Azeez Muhtadi narrated that he said to Imam Al-Rida (‘a): “I am unable to meet you every time, so from whom shall I take the principle features of my religion?”

“Take them from Yunus ibn Abd al-Rahman” replied the Imam (‘a).”[1]

There were a great number of jurisprudents in the Islamic world who followed the Imam (‘a) in their jurisprudential affairs. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) asked his companions to consult them on jurisprudential and doctrinal matters. Some of these jurisprudents were Ahmad ibn Muhammad Bazantee, Muhammad ibn Fadl Kufi, Abdullah ibn Jundab Bajali and Hussain ibn Saeed Ahwazi etc.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was never negligent towards the activities of his follower jurisprudents and kept them under his own observation, not letting them relate any false tradition regarding his father and forefathers (‘a). He never forgave such people. The Imam (‘a) said of Younis, the master of Ali ibn Yaqtin: “May Allah curse him because he fabricated lies against my father [and related a false narration to my father (‘a)].[2]

Economic Reformation

Since Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was not a ruler, neither did he have a strong economic basis with which he could achieve economic reform, he

1. **Rijal Kashi**, 2:779, *hadith* no. 910; **Kholasat al-Aqwal**, pp. 296-297.
2. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:261- 262 (taken from **al-Sara'ir**, 3:580).

preached and propagated the Islamic teachings related to economic life and systems. He collected all the Islamic rules regarding economy in a long dissertation. In this dissertation, the Imam (‘a) mentioned the isolation of any of the rules as a major sin. Some punishments were also mentioned for people committing such crimes.

It is also obligatory to believe in abstinence from forbidden matters, which are wrongful consumption of orphans’ property… It is furthermore obligatory to believe in the prohibition of usury, unlawful trade after proof is demonstrated, gambling, cheating in weighing and measuring, detention of the rights in solvency and squandering.[1]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) called people to pay Zakat which is one of the most important economic sources in Islam. He said: “Allah has ordered us to perform three things which are related to three things: offering prayers and giving zakat. Therefore, he who offers prayers but does not give zakat, his prayers are also unacceptable.”[2]

The Imam (‘a) explained the negative consequences of evildoing and injustice, including not paying zakat. He said: “Whenever the rulers tell a lie, heaven stops showering rain; and if a king oppresses, its government becomes degraded and mean; and whenever the people refrain from paying zakat, domesticated and herbivorous animals die.”[3]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) always encouraged the people to take their zakat to the needy and deserving people. When he was asked about zakat being given to unbelievers, he said: “No and zakat fitra [is also not allowed to be given to them.][4]

Also he said: “paying zakat fitra is obligatory… paying it to those other than the people of guardianship (the Shi'ahs), because it is

1. **Tuhaf al-Uqul**, p. 423; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:134; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 10:366.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:234; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 71:68; **al-Khisal**, p. 156.
3. Shaykh Tusi, **Amali**, 1:79; Shaykh al-Mofid, **Amali**, pp. 310-311.
4. **al-Kafi**, 3:547; **Tahthib al-Ahkam**, 4:524; **al-Maqn'ah**, p. 242.

obligatory [zakat]."[1]

What we are about to mention here are the words of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) which clearly show how the cruel rulers plundered the property of the Muslims and how they used it for the fulfillment of their own desires without thinking of any religious limits. To face the looting of the cruel rulers, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) asked the Shi'ahis to pay the khums of their properties to the Imams (‘a) and refrain from giving it to the rulers who had usurped the post of caliphate and were not ruling legally. He answered a Persian trader's letter in the following words:

"The use of property is not lawful unless it is used in the way Allah has made lawful. Al-Khums helps us in our religion, in the expenses of our dependents and our friends. It helps us to gift and buy protection for our dignity from those whom we fear. Do not withhold it from us and do not deprive yourselves of our prayers as far as it is possible for you. Paying al-Khums increases your earnings, cleanses your sins and whatever you would preserve for yourselves for the day that you would need help the most."[2]

He encouraged the people to have economic cooperation with each other. He said: "A generous person eats food on another's tablecloth so that the others also will eat food on his tablecloth."[3]

Once, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said to Ali ibn Yaqtin: "guarantee the fulfillment of the requirements of an old [and indolent] person along with his family, so that I will guarantee paradise for you."[4]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was strongly against a lavish lifestyle and squandering.Yasir Khadim said: "One day all the slaves were eating fruit; however, they were throwing the fruit away, eating only half of them. The Imam (‘a), who saw what was happening, said:

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:131; **Tuhaf al-Uqul**, p. 418.
2. **Al-Kafi**, 1:547-548; **Al-Istibsar**, 2:59.
3. **Fara'id al-Samtain**, 2:223; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:15; **Al-Mahasin**, 2:449.
4. **Rijal Kashi**, 2:704, *hadith* no. 749; **Rijal al-Najashi**, p. 222; **Kholasat al-Aqwal**, p. 198.

"Glory to Allah! If your stomachs are filled and you do not need them any more, there are still some people who need them."[1]

The Imam ('a) distributed among the needy and poor people who came to him. Once, on the day of Arafa, he distributed among them everything he had with him."[2]

Under such conditions, which were dominating the Islamic society of those days, Imam Al-Rida ('a) had become such a great role model for his generosity and charity that all the Muslims wanted to follow him. For the people, the Imam's ('a) generosity had become the standard on the basis of which they distinguished between right and wrong. On one hand, there was the economic method of the Household ('a) and on the other hand, there was the economic system of the cruel rulers who were using the treasury of the Muslims for their own benefits as if it was their own property.

Another issue which was strongly opposed by Imam Al-Rida ('a) was Sufism, wrong concepts and understandings of piety. The founders of Sufism were enjoyingconsiderable support from the cruel rulers because, with the help of these deviated schools of thought they were able to keep the Muslims involved in their own problems and not let them criticize the political or economic system of government. Also, in this way, they were prevented from asking for their rights. With a little consideration of the lives of these founders of different schools of thought we come to know that they themselves enjoyed eating on the tablecloths of the cruel rulers and had a great share in the looted properties of the Muslims –the treasure house– as if they had not understood the real meaning of piety. These people, despite their own facilities, criticized Imam Al-Rida ('a). They pretended in a way that they were not interested in this world at all.

On the other hand, when we research Imam Al-Rida's ('a) life, we find him to be a very pious person, because, while at home, he sat on a mat during the summer season. However, he did not want anyone to see him, unlike the Sufis who wanted the people to see and praise

1. **Kafi**, 6:297; **Al-Mahasin**, 2, p. 441.
2. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:100; **Manaqib Aal Abi Talib**, 3:470.

them. During the winter, he wore a cloak made of goat hair. He always wore rough woolen cloths when at home. However, when he went out, he wore good quality clothes.[1]

Once a group of Sufis visited the Imam (‘a) and said to him: “The Imamah is for those who eat dry and unpleasant food, wear rough clothes, sit on the back of donkeys and visit the sick!”

The Imam (‘a) said to them: “Joseph (Yusuf) (‘a) was a prophet who used to wear silk mantles brocaded with gold. He sat on the thrones of the Pharaohs and ruled. An Imam is required to be just and fair; when he says something, he says the truth, and when he passes judgment, he judges equitably, and when he promises something, he fulfills his promise. God did not forbid (an Imam) from wearing a particular type of clothing or from eating a particular type of food.”[2]

In this manner, negating the incorrect concepts and ideas, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) opened a battlefield where his opponents were the rulers and powerful people who were playing a very strong role in preaching these wrong ideas and who not only let the founders of these ideaspreach them but also supported them.

Ethical Reform

Ethics was another field in the life of the people which was to be reformed and managed. Therefore, ethical and social change was to be brought about in society to change the atmosphere which had become the custom. The Imam (‘a) did not miss any chance of bringing ethical reformation. For this, he used many educative and corrective methods such as:

1. Following the Prophet of Allah (s)

If Imam Al-Rida (‘a) directly interfered in governmental affairs or if

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:192; **al-Manaqib**, 3:470; **'Ilam al-Wara bi I'lam al-Huda**, 2:64.
2. **Kashf al-ghummah**, 3:103; (from al-Aabi, Nathir al-Durar); **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 4:1004; Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, **Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah**, 11:34-35.

he criticized the governing system of the Abbasid caliphs, they would create trouble for him and put him under great pressure. However, they did not have the power to stop the Imam (‘a) from expressing the qualities of the Prophet of Allah (s), especially his governmental conduct. That is why the Imam (‘a) started spreading awareness among the people of the governmental conduct of the Prophet (s) as a role model for the rulers, and the knowledge of the Messenger of Allah (s) as a model for jurisprudents and other Muslims. The Imam (‘a) was in a good position for his activities. Hence, the Imam (‘a) quoted narrations from his father and forefathers (‘a) about the Prophet’s (s) conduct every now and then.

The Imam (‘a) narrated from Imam Hassan (‘a) from the Commander of the faithful (‘a) that said of the Prophet’s (s) conduct: “While meeting his ummah, he preferred the pious people, and met them according to their piety. Some of these men had one wish; some others had two while there were people with several wishes.

[The Prophet (s)] solved their problems and visited his nation. He ordered them to do what was best for them. Then he said to them: “Those who are present should convey my message to those who are not here; and [O you who are present here] let me know the problems of those who are not able to come to me and tell me about their problems… [Then the Commander of the faithful (‘a) said:] the Prophet (s) talked only about what was related to him… He magnified the leaders of the nations and appointed them to their nations… He visited his companions and asked them about their problems… The best person in the eyes of the Prophet (s) was someone who was superior [in the matters of religion and knowledge] and who was more helpful to the Muslims. Such a person had a great value in the eyes of the Prophet (s)… His good behaviour had impressed all the people and he was a kind father to them. However, as far as justice is concerned, for him every person was equal.

He was a very well–behaved person… He did not interfere in the matters of the people: he did not criticize anyone; he did not backbite anyone; and he did not try to unveil anyone's faults… He had gained tolerance as a quality and was not afraid of anything; neither did he become angry. In addition to observing all precautions and warnings, he had four good qualities in him: he chose goodness so that others

might follow him; he left whatever was wrong, so that other people might also leave it; all his efforts dealt with something beneficial for his nations; and he always tried to do something in which there were benefits for both worlds."[1]

By transmitting such narrations and by making the good qualities of the Prophet (s) manifest to the people, actually Imam Al-Rida (‘a) indirectly invited the Muslim nation to distinguish between the two kinds of ethical methods; the first one being the method of the rulers of their time, and the second one being the Prophet's (s) conduct which was the base for ethical conduct and method for all members of the Household (‘a).

In this way, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) brought awareness among the people about the Abbasids' behaviour and conduct by narrating and transmitting the traditions and narrations related to the conduct of the Prophet (s) in the most peaceful manner before the Abbasid rulers could remove these traditions.

2. Imam Al-Rida (‘a), a Great Model

Since the Imam (‘a) was a great model to lead and to be followed, he also started fulfilling his duties on the basis of constant values and standards. He started his activities as a great example of Islamic ethics which he presented to the other Muslims. He was the best person of his time in the fields of truthfulness, trustworthiness, keeping promises, humility, showing respect for others, taking an interest in the Muslims' affairs and removing their needs and necessities. The Imam (‘a) took a practical part in the reformation of the corruption which was dominating society in those days. The following story makes manifest what we have said above:

"One day the Imam (‘a) ordered preparations for his meal to which he invited all his attendants, black and non–black people, so I said: `May my life be sacrificed for yours! Maybe these should have a separate eating arrangement.' He said: "God Almighty is One; the father

1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:282-285; **Ma'ani al-Akhbar**, pp. 79-83; **Makarim al-Akhlaq**, pp. 11-15.

(Adam) and the mother (Eve) are the same, and people are rewarded according to their deeds."[1]

Imam Al-Rida ('a) glorified even his slaves and did not order them to do something unless they had finished eating. He told his servants: "Whenever you are eating food, do not stand up in my honour at my entrance unless you have finished your food."[2]

Ibrahim ibn Abbas praised Imam's ('a) great morals and methods. He said:'Ibrahim ibn Abbas is quoted as saying: "I never saw Abul–Hassan Al-Rida ('a) angering anyone by something he said, nor did I ever see him interrupting anyone, nor refusing to do someone a favour he was able to do, nor did he ever stretch his legs before an audience, nor leaned upon something while his companion did not, nor did he ever call any of his servants or attendants a bad name, nor did I ever see him spit or burst into laughter; rather, his laughter was just a smile. When he was ready to eat and he sat to be served, he seated with him all his attendants, including the doorman and the groom. He always did good to people and distributed much charity; most of which was distributed in secret."[3]

Imam Al-Rida ('a) showed humility towards the people. Imam Al-Rida ('a) once went to the public bath–house and someone asked him to give him a massage saying: "O man, help me wash myself and give me some massage." Imam Al-Rida ('a) did what he was asked to do and kept giving the man a massage till someone recognized him and told that person who that dignitary was. The man felt extremely embarrassed; he apologized to the Imam ('a) while the Imam ('a) was making him calm down and continued giving him a massage."[4]

Among the other good qualities of Imam Al-Rida ('a) was forgiveness. He never behaved badly towards a person who had

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1. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:101; **al-Kafi**, 8:230.
2. **Al-Mahasin**, 2:423; **Manaqib Aal Abi Talib**, 4:389; **al-Kafi**, 6:289; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:102.
3. **Manaqib Aal Abi Talib**, 4:389; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:63; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:197-198.
4. **Manaqib Aal Abi Talib**, 4:389; **Noor al-Absar**, pp. 232-233; **Al-Wafi bil Wafiyat**, 22:156-157.

behaved badly towards him. He was so kind that he had vengeance towards no–one. In the reign of Harun, a person named Jaloodi attacked Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) house and looted all the jewelry of the women of the household. However, the Imam (‘a) ignored this behaviour and asked Harun to forgive the person.[1]

Then Imam (‘a) praises good behaviour in the form of the following poem:

“If I am tried by the ignorance of those inferior to me,

Then I prevent myself from returning in kind through ignorance.

If those like me are similar to me in intellect,

Then I escape due to my clemency that I may be far above the like.

If I am inferior to him in excellence and intellect,

Then I recognize his right of superiority and excellence.”[2]

3. Calling towards Respectful Behaviour

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) always called the people towards respectful behaviour. For this, he gave examples of the Prophet's (s) good behavior. These were the traditions which made the Muslims aware of good behaviour. Some of these traditions are given below:

The holy Prophet of Islam (s) said: “He who hides his good deed will be rewarded seventy times and he who reveals others' bad deeds is expelled; and he who hides it is forgiven.”[3]

Also he said: “Allah has sent me along with blessings, not for annoyance.”[4]

The holy Prophet (s) also said: “The promise made by a faithful person is like a vow which must be observed. However, if he does not

1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:172; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:166-167.
2. **Manaqib Aal Abi Talib**, 4:402; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:178.
3. **Al-Kafi**, 2:428 and 4:24; **Thawab al-A'amal**, al-Saduq, p. 179.
4. **Al-Kafi**, 2:159; **Mushkat al-Anwar**, p. 278.

observe it, he does not have to pay atonement for it."[1]

Imam Musa Al-Rida (‘a) called Islamic society to Islamic values and standards, Islamic traditions and the Prophet's (s) conduct. He said in this regard: "A faithful person becomes a really faithful one only when he finds three qualities with him: the first of Allah, the second quality of the Prophet (s) and the third quality of a divine guardian. Therefore, having the quality of Allah, he must hide his good deeds from the people; with the help of his prophetic quality, he must behave kindly towards the people; while with the help of his quality of a divine guardian, he must be a patient one in the face of difficulties [and such a person is a really faithful one.]"[2]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) also mentioned the levels of humility starting from a person and embracing all society, saying:

"Humility has different levels such as the fact that a man should understand his values. He should place himself in that position with a pure heart. He should behave towards people in the way he wishes them to treat him. If he observes something evil about someone, he should try to remove this evil with goodness and love. He should overcome his anger and should forgive the people because Allah loves the good–doers."[3]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) used stories and anecdotes of good people to reach his targets and to set society on the right path. In this way, he tried to draw a good image of reformation in the minds of the people. One of the stories is given below:

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said: "A man from Bani Israel worshipped Allah the most Honourable the most High for forty years; but his worship was not accepted in Allah's court. The man thought: "Whatever you are facing is just because of you and no one else is involved in it."

Allah the Almighty was revealed to him saying: "Your self–criticism

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1. **Kashf al-ghummah**, 3:61; this tradition was narrated by Janabuzi who related it to the Prophet (‘a).
2. **Al-Kafi**, 2:241-242; **Al-‘Amali, al-Saduq**, p. 408; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:232-233; **Tuhaf al-Uqul**, p. 442.
3. **Al-Kafi**, 2:124; **al-Dur al-Nadhim**, p. 693; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 72: 135.

is better than your forty years of worshipping."[1]

Since poetry has a direct effect on one's feelings and actions, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) benefited from poetry as a means of reformation in society. In one of his poems, the Imam (‘a) said of social relations:

"Accept the apology of your brother and hide his bad deeds and habits;

When a stupid ignorant person accuses you of something [be self–contained and] be patient against bitterness at the time;

Forgive the ill–doers magnanimously; and let the auditor [Allah the Exalted] deal with oppressors."[2]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) used this art for building a connection between the Muslims, making them refrain from unending and betraying wishes and sketching clear pictures of these ideas in their minds; because when these reformations were presented to the society in the form of poetry, they played a very effective role in the reformation of society. In one of his poems, the Imam (‘a) says:

"We all wish that there may be a delay in the time of our death; while the deaths are themselves the calamities for wishes.

Do not let vain wishes make you proud and deceive you; therefore, observe moderation and do not make pretexts.

The world is like a mortal shadow, which is for providing the caravan with a rest and soon after comes removal forever."[3]

Also of importance are fair social relations towards which Imam Al-Rida (‘a) called the people. The Imam called them towards brotherhood, empathy and sympathy in all kinds of trouble. Also he invited them to refrain from unpleasant behaviour and morals which could become the reason for relationships to become weak or break

1. **Qurb al-Isnad**, p. 392; **Al-Kafi**, 2:73; **Mushkat al-Anwar**, pp. 431-432.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:189-190; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:69; **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:980; **Tarikh Baghdad**, 4:137.
3. **Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah**, 10:273; **Tahthib al-Kamal**, 21:152.

down. Among the things from which Imam (‘a) asked the people to refrain were lying, backbiting, informing, accusing, and snatching others' rights, property and lives.

In a nutshell, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) tried his best to make the Muslims spend their lives according to the Prophet (s) and the holy Imams' (‘a) conduct. In this manner, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) wanted them not to go astray but to keep following the right path.

4. Creation of Righteous Group

As we have already mentioned, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) wanted a society free from every kind of deviation. For this purpose, he benefited from every propagating means. That is why Imam (‘a) played his educational part on two different levels:

A.On the level of society and Islamic Ummah;

B.On the level of the chosen ones and the righteous group.

The Imam’s (‘a) activity on the level of society and Islamic Ummah embraced everyone including the rulers and the followers of the Household (‘a) who were the cause of the Islamic society coming into being. On the way to his mission of promotion for good and prohibition from evil, the Imam (‘a) tried to keep the people away from what was evil and encouraged them in their inclination towards good morals.

However, his activities with the group of righteous people were very different. The Imam (‘a) had to train a group living their lives according to the Household (‘a). By doing so, the Imam (‘a) wanted to train them according to the events having divine aspects which could make them able to take the responsibility of social welfare and removal of the deviation which was ruling society at that time. To reach this target, the Imam (‘a) had to carry out his activities with precision and he had to increase his care of the afore–mentioned group so that he was able to produce a considerable group of real and powerful reformers.

Therefore, we find the Imam (‘a) meeting the groups of his companions every now and then and writing to his companions who were living in other cities so that their qualities could be reinforced

according to the Household's (‘a) conduct. Also the Imam (‘a) wanted their morals to be perfect; therefore, he did not miss a single chance and kept guiding them in this regard. Hassan ibn Hussain narrated: “Ahmad ibn Hammad took a great amount of money from me by force. I wrote a letter to Abul Hassan (‘a) and complained about what Ahmad ibn Hammad had done to me. The Imam (‘a) wrote back to me: “Make him afraid of Allah.”

I did as the Imam (‘a) had told me to do, but it was of no use. Therefore, I wrote another letter to him and reminded him that I acted upon his command but it was not useful. The Imam (‘a) wrote to me: “If telling him to fear Allah does not have any effect on him, how can we tell him to fear us?”[1]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) did not think oral propagation was enough. Therefore, he spent his property too, so that he could make more and more people accept Islamic morals. The Imam (‘a) bought slaves and after they had been trained according to pure Islamic teachings, he released them. During his life, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) freed one thousand slaves, [2] all of who benefited from his knowledge and learned from his behaviour. Obviously a thousand people have a great effect in bringing moral change within a society. Each of these people was released after having been trained in the heart of Imamah and moral teaching. When these people went out in society, they had already been changed into illuminati and started their mission of reformation among the people with great sincerity.

From among the freed slaves of Imam Al-Rida (‘a), a great number of sincere reformers emerged so that the people could observe them both on an identical and a sensory level and be inspired by them to join Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) followers. Hence, in the time of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) the number of his followers increased. As a result, the base of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was strengthened in most places in the Islamic world.

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1. **Rijal Kashi**, 2:834, *hadith* no. 1059.
2. **Al-Ithaf bi Hub al-Ashraf**, p. 312.

Political Reformation

We will discuss this discourse in several paragraphs:

1. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and Divine Leadership

To understand the methods of the divine and revolutionary leadership of Imam Al-Rida (‘a), it is necessary to present a clear and precise outline of these methods. In this way we will be able to understand Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) divine leadership through historical events.

Certainly, one of the most important responsibilities of an infallible Imam (‘a) is to work on the doctrinal, moral, social and political structure of man and society. This responsibility requires a strong base among the people which should be on the basis of the House-hold’s (‘a) method and their Islamic theory about essence, life and society. Therefore, an Imam (‘a) does not consider mere political activities to be enough and he does not try to come to power because his entire political activities are only a minor part of all his general activities. An Imam (‘a) takes part in political activities and achieves power to achieve his holy goals and this is what all the holy Imams (‘a) attempted. Certainly, the Imams' (‘a) attempts at achieving their goals depended on the situations regulating society. The conditions under which Imam Ali (‘a), Imam Hassan (‘a) and Imam Hussain (‘a) spent their lives were completely different from those under which Imam Sajjad (‘a) and other holy Imams (‘a) lived. The first three holy Imams (‘a) were able to take a direct part in all fields of divine and revolutionary leadership, but when coming to Imam Sajjad (‘a) and the Imams (‘a) after him, the conditions and atmosphere had completely changed. Therefore, the Imams (‘a) unwillingly kept an indirect eye on events, especially the political and military conditions, and continued the divine revolutionary movement in secret without being noticed by the rulers and government officials. These activities were carried out by the Imams (‘a) at such a time that the rulers were unable to judge anything about them. Let us not forget that there were some special reasons behind why did the Imams (‘a) had bound themselves to such activities, such as:

Firstly: considering the common interests on the level of Islamic Ummah and Islamic society;

Secondly: special interests of Islam that believed in the Household's (‘a) movement as the trustees of reformation of the conditions;

Thirdly: the common as well as special conditions and specialties such as the power of movement and strength of base.

Observing all the above–mentioned three conditions, the holy Imams (‘a) took the responsibility of leadership in all dimensions; even military movements. However, they performed their duty in the most secret manner and in an indirect way so as to keep themselves safe from being killed at the very beginning of their responsibilities which they had to perform as Imams (‘a).

They preferred the reformation of the Ummah above everything else. It was necessary for them to be among the people if they wanted society to be reformed. Also to achieve their targets which Islam had fixed for them it was necessary for them to be among the people. If the holy Imams (‘a) directly guided the revolutions and military movements, they certainly would be killed. In this case, the Islamic world would have no one to nourish guiding jurisprudents, learned men, pious people, worshippers, purified and truthful politicians and the leaders of revolutionary movements and present them to the people.

In short, the Imam (‘a) followed two lines:

Firstly: the intellectual line which was to increase the level of education and promotion of good and delivery from evil in the most peaceful manner.

Secondly: the line of resistance, which had the responsibility of using power in order to stop the deviations of the governments from the right path of Islam and its basic rules. Moreover, another motive of this line was to declare revolts against the tyranical rulers and governments. We come to know about this by considering the Imam's (‘a) methods and conducts. After Imam Hussain's (‘a) martyrdom, when his family were made captives, Imam Zain al-Abidin (‘a) used this method because the conditions had changed. On the other hand, the basis of the Household (‘a) had become strengthened among the people and a group of people with different social positions had announced they were joining Imam Zain al-Abidin (‘a).

During Imam Zain al-Abidin's ('a) Imamah, a group named "Tawwabeen" revolted against the government under the leadership of Mukhtar al-Thaqafi for vengeance of the blood of Imam Hussain ('a) and the other martyrs of Karbala. Although this revolt was supported by Imam Sajjad ('a), the Amawi rulers could not find Imam Sajjad ('a) involved in this revolt. When Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah –Imam Sajjad's ('a) uncle – talked to him about supporting this revolt, Imam Sajjad ('a) said: "O Uncle, if a black slave rises in our support, it becomes obligatory for all the people to support him. I leave this up to you. Do whatever you want."[1]

In this event, secrecy was observed to its most possible level and only a few people knew what was going on. When a group of people visited Muhammad ibn Hanafiyya, he asked them to join Mukhtar al-Thaqafi in his revolt. On the other hand, he wrote a letter to Ibrahim ibn Malik Ashtar and encouraged him to join Mukhtar's revolt.[2]

When Abdullah ibn Zubair surrounded Muhammad ibn Hanafiyya and threatened to kill or burn down the place, Muhammad wrote a letter to Mukhtar in which he asked for his help. On receipt of the letter, Mukhtar sent an army who brought Muhammad out of danger.[3]

After this, there remains no doubt in our minds that Imam Sajjad ('a) had made Muhammad ibn Hanafiyya the leader and commander of the military army and had given him the authority to give commands without having Imam Sajjad's ('a) involvement in this matter. After the government of Amawis had finished in Iraq, Hijaz and some other parts of Islamic lands and after Mukhtar took control of these areas, Imam Zain al-Abidin praised Mukhtar among some of his companions saying: "All praise belongs to Allah [who blessed me] that I am witnessing the vengeance over my enemies and [may Allah] bless Mukhtar with good rewards.[4]

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1. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 45:365, (taken from: Ja'far ibn Nama al-Hili, Risala Thawb al-Nuddar fi Sharh al-Thar) in which the author narrated it from his father Muhammad ibn Nawahili.).
2. **Al-kamil fi Tarikh**, 4:414 and 415; **Tarikh al- Tabari**, 4:492-495.
3. **Al-kamil fi Tarikh**, 4:544-545 **Tarikh al- Tabari**, 4:250-251.
4. **Rijal Kashi**, 1:341, *hadith* no. 203.

While on one hand Imam Sajjad (‘a) was indirectly supporting Mukhtar's revolt, at the same time he presented to the Islamic World some learned men, jurisprudents and narrators such as “Abdullah ibn al-Hassan”, “Zahari”, “Amro ibn Dinar”, “Ali ibn Zaid ibn Jud'an” and “Yahya ibn Umm Taweel”.[1]

Imam Sajjad (‘a) was worried about future leadership. Therefore, he trained one of his sons Muhammad Baqir (‘a) for the post of Imamah and his other son Zaid for revolt against the cruel government.

In the time of Imam Baqir’s (‘a) Imamah, Zaid came to his brother Imam Baqir (‘a) and asked his permission. Imam (‘a) said to him: “O Zaid! Do not do it; because I fear that you will be killed outside of Kufa and your dead body will be hung.”

Zaid also followed what his brother said and did not revolt during the Imamah of his brother.”[2]

Zaid ibn Ali accepted the Imamah of his brother Imam Baqir (‘a) and his nephew Imam Sadiq (‘a). In his poem below, he expresses his following the two Imams (‘a) as follows:

“Baqir (the splitter of the sciences) is sleeping in the grave; he who was the Imam (‘a) for the people of the world and who was purified.

After him I have no one but [Imam] Ja’far [Sadiq (‘a)]; he who is the Imam (‘a) for the people of the world and who is the only praised one.”[3]

What Imam Baqir (‘a) said to Zaid clearly explains that the Imams (‘a) led the military action in an indirect way.

The Imam (‘a) said of Zaid's revolt and fate: “Certainly my brother Zaid ibn Ali will revolt and he will be killed in the right way. Thus, woe to him who leaves him alone. Woe to him who fights with him.

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1. **Rijal al-Tousi**, pp. 109-120.
2. **Al-khara'ij wa al-jara'ih**, 1:281; **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:899; **Yanabi'a al-Mawaddah**, 3:49; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 2:357.
3. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 46:296 (taken from: Manaqib Aal Abi Talib, 3:329).

Woe to him who kills him."[1]

During Imam Sadiq 's ('a) Imamah and after Zaid's revolt, a group of people went to meet Imam Sadiq ('a) and asked him about swearing their allegiance to Zaid. Imam ('a) confirmed: "Swear your oath of allegiance to him."[2]

Imam Sadiq ('a) always said: "May God associate me in [the rewards for those martyrs and] all that blood. By God, my uncle Zaid and his companions just like Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) and his companions stepped the same way and were martyred just like them."[3]

Considering the ruling conditions, the revolutionaries did not mention the name of any Imam ('a) while inviting people to join them but rather mentioned him under the title of "a satisfactory person from the Household ('a)". The Imam ('a) always asked his companions to refrain from taking part in revolts with those who did not believe in his Imamah. He said: "if someone [from our family] comes to you [and asks you to join him in his revolt], hesitate for a while and just ask yourself why you should revolt. Do not revolt saying: "Zaid also revolted [and he is also from the same family and we must join his revolt. You must keep in mind that] Zaid was a learned person and he was a truthful one. He did not call you [to swear your allegiance] himself but rather he asked you [to accept the call of] "the satisfactory person from the Household ('a)"; and if he weresuccessful, certainly he would fulfill his promise."[4]

It is necessary here to know that the inclination towards military action could turn out to be a shield and fortress for Imams ('a) in two ways:

Firstly, it could defend the condition and revolutionary spirit of society and helped people to be prepared for revolt and dedication anywhere and at any time.

Secondly, with the rulers involved in chasing and facing the revolts

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1. **Kharazmi, Maqtal al-Hussain**, 2:127.
2. **Al-kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 5:243; **Tarikh al-Tabari**, 5:499.
3. **Al-Amali**, al-Saduq, 46:171; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 1:228-229.
4. **Al- Kafi**, 8:264; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 52:301-302.

and revolutionary movements, the Imams (‘a) could have a better chance of continuing their reforming activities. The Imams (‘a) had activities in all fields other than the revolts because they could keep themselves safe from any possible harm from the government and the rulers. On the other hand, with the presence of an Imam (‘a) among the people, the lives of the people of the Household (‘a) and his companions were guaranteed. Moreover, the rulers who were involved in activities against the revolutionaries did not get any chance to interfere in the Imam’s (‘a) activities or stop him from what he was doing; trying to suppress every kind of activity could become the cause of more and uncontrollable revolts. Therefore, those people enjoyed more governmental freedom who pretended to be students or traders.

Imam Sadiq (‘a), pointing to the military movements as being fortresses and shields, said: “Close your mouth [from making the secrets known] and remain in your houses [because in these two conditions] and your religion will remain safe and [keep in mind that] “Zaidiya” will always be your shield.”[1]

In this manner, the supervision of the Imam (‘a) of the military and armed movements was done in the most secret manner. Only the people who were playing a very important role in divine and revolutionary actions knew about the Imam’s (‘a) supervision. Though the Imam (‘a) was supervising military movements in such a manner that the rulers could not make any connection between him (‘a) and these movements they still accused the Imam (‘a) of being behind all these actions.

Abu Ja’far Mansur used to say: “Is there anyone who can accept my pretext and excuse about this Ja’far? He takes one step forward and then one step backward saying: “I avoid Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hassan. If he becomes victorious then the affair [of caliphate] will be mine; and if he is defeated still, I will remain safe.”[2]

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1. **Al-Kafi**, 2:225; **al-Ghaybah by al-Nu'mani**, p. 204; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 72:82 and 52:139.
2. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 47:192; **Muhaj al-Da'awat**, pp. 232-233.

The commanders of the military wings did not mention the name of the Imam (‘a) in clear words, but they mentioned him emblematically. Hussain ibn Ali – the man of Fakh – and Yahya ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hassan said: “Our revolt was the result of our consultation with our family members. We asked Musa ibn Ja’far [about our revolt] and he ordered us to do it.”[1]

When Hussain ibn Ali – discussed with Imam Kadhim (‘a) his idea of revolt, the Imam (‘a) said to him: [O Hussain!] Certainly you will be martyred; therefore, fight as bravely as you can… We all belong to Him and to Him is our return… May Allah reward your family mourning for you.”[2]

Musa al-Hadi, the Abbasid caliph, thought that Hussain ibn Ali – the man of Fakh – was motivated by Imam Kadhim (‘a) for his revolt. Therefore, he kept blaming Imam Kadhim (‘a) for it. He said: “By God, Hussain revolted following only his command and he followed him in his revolt; because he [Imam Kadhim (‘a)] has the post of Imamah in his family. May God kill me if I leave him to live.”

Then Abu Yousuf, the judge, convinced Musa saying that what he was thinking was not true. In this way, he was successful in calming him down.”[3]

Imam Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) also followed the path of his father and forefathers (‘a) in all of his divine and revolutionary activities. At the same time, he simultaneously was leading all political, revolutionary, military, educational and social directions. He performed so intelligently and secretly that whatever he did could not be known or judged by the rulers at all.

Al-Ma’mun's insistance on Imam Al-Rida (‘a) accepting the post of succession to the crown is one of the best illustrations in understanding that Al-Ma’mun was afraid of the Alawis movements. He knew that once Imam Al-Rida (‘a) accepted the post of succession to the crown, the Alawis would have no pretext for continuing their

1. **Maqatil al-Talibiin**, p. 304.
2. **Maqatil al-Talibiin**, p. 298; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:196.
3. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:151; **Muhaj al-Da'awat**, pp. 266-267.

revolt against the government.

2. Imam's ('a) Political Role in al-Harun and al-Ameen's Time

In the time of Harun and al-Ameen the political atmosphere was relatively in favour of Imam Al-Rida ('a). It was a time when Imam Al-Rida ('a) had good opportunities for making his base strong and arming the people with good political thoughts in favour of the Household ('a). Also he got a chance to prepare his men for taking a stand when finding the conditions in their favour. That is why we see that during the ruling period of Harun and al-Ameen, the Alawides took no action against them and there were no revolts in these periods.

Imam Al-Rida ('a) observed great secrecy. Therefore, he was able to convey good political thoughts to the people. Otherwise, if the rulers came to know anything about Imam's ('a) activities, they would remove him from his post, put him in jail or kill him. By narrating the narrations from his father and forefathers ('a), he insisted on the presence of an Imam ('a) among every nation. The Imam ('a) quoted a narration from his father ('a) who had heard it from his forefathers ('a) quoting it from the Prophet (s) who said: "The people of every era will be called with their Imams ('a), their holy book and the conduct of their prophets (and will be related to them)."[1]

Then Imam Al-Rida ('a) counted the qualities of a real Imam ('a) to make the people able to distinguish between a true Imam ('a) and a liar claiming to be an Imam ('a). He mentioned the qualities of an infallible Imam ('a) saying: "a [true] Imam ('a) has some signs: he is the most learned, the best in judgment, the most pious, the most tolerant, the bravest, the most generous and the most worshipping person."[2]

According to Imam Al-Rida ('a), some other qualities of a qualified Imam ('a) are the individuality and unity of the Imam ('a) and his Imamah; and a true Imam ('a) should accept the responsibility of

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1. **Manaqib Aal Abi Talib**, 2:263; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:36-37; **al-Umdah Ibn Batriq**, p. 352; **Al-Yaqin**, Ibn -Taous, p. 2493.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:129; **al-Khisal**, pp. 527-528; **Kashfal-Ghummah**, 3:82.

doing the actions.[1]

Moreover, according to Imam Al-Rida (‘a) one of the reasons behind it is the coordination in all actions and positioning against chaos in the Islamic nation as well as the government. Therefore, if two or more Imams (‘a) live at one time, there will be a contradiction between them and the foundation of political beliefs along with Islamic government. If there are more than two Imams (‘a) at a certain period of time, only one of them will be the Imam (‘a) commanding and taking the responsibility of different activities, while the rest of them would be void. Following and listening to all of them is not legal according to the religion.

For this reason, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) narrated some traditions and narrations which mentioned the virtues and roles of the Household (‘a) in Islam. He narrated from his forefathers (‘a) who narrated from the Prophet (s) who said: “My family is like Noah's Ark. Whoever embarked on it was saved. Whoever missed it drowned.[2]

It has also been narrated from the Prophet (s): “The stars in the sky are the means of protection for those living in the skies while my family is the source of protection of the Ummah.”[3]

So Imam Al-Rida (‘a) narrated from the Prophet (s), saying: “O Ali, you are the divider of heaven and hell [none shall enter heaven unless he has recognized you, and you have recognized him! And none shall enter hell unless he has rejected you and you have rejected him.][4]

Then Imam Al-Rida (‘a) made the generations aware of the standards with which they could distinguish the truth and its followers from untruth; also he made society and the Islamic Ummah aware of consulting the people of the Household (‘a) and recognizing their high position. For this, he mentioned the virtues of some of the friends and

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:108; **'Ilal al-Shari'a**, 1:254; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 25:105.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:30; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 23:122.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:30; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 27:309.
4. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:30; **Manaqib ibn al-Maghzeli**, p. 107; **Manaqib al-Kharazmi**, p. 294; **al-'Umdah**, p. 265.

companions of the Household (‘a) such as Ammar, Abuthar, Miqdad and Salman. The Imam (‘a), therefore, related a narration from the Prophet (s) in which the Prophet (s) said to Ali (‘a): “Paradise is eager to see you, Ammar, Salman, Abuthar and Miqdad.”[1]

Also he narrated from the Prophet (s) who said: “A vicious group will kill Ammar.”[2]

Also Imam Al-Rida (‘a) insisted on the importance of wilayah and companionship of the Household (‘a) as well as the importance of hating their enemies and rivals. He said: “The perfection of the religion means our fellowship and feeling of disgust for our enemies.”[3]

With different narrations from his forefathers (‘a) and their forefather the Prophet (s), Imam Al-Rida (‘a) called the people towards showing the feeling of respect for the sons of the Prophet (s). He narrated from the Prophet (s): “I will intercede on behalf of the following four groups of people on the day of resurrection: those who honour my progeny; those who help them fulfill their needs; those who help them in their affairs when they urgently need help; those who love them verbally and wholeheartedly.”[4]

At a time when unpleasant events and loudpropagations were dominating society, and when realities and beliefs had become inverted, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) made the Ummah aware of the real meaning of Shiism and presented to them clear examples of it. He said: “Certainly Hassan (‘a), Hussain (‘a), Abuthar, Salman, Miqdad and Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr are his Shi'ahs; the ones who did not disobey his smallest order and did not do the slightest thing which he

1. **Al-Khisal**, p. 303; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:72; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 22:324-325.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:68; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 22:326.
3. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 27:58; **al-Sara’ir**, 3:640.
4. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:230; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 93:220; al-Tusi, **al-Amali**, p. 366.

told them to refrain from."[1]

Also Imam Al-Rida (‘a) defined Shi'ahs saying: "Our Shia are those who offer the prayers, defray the zakat, perform the hajj to the Holy House of Allah, fast during the month of Ramadan, declare their loyalty to the Prophet's Household (‘a), and declare their disavowal of the enemies of the Prophet's Household (‘a). Those are the people of faith, god–fearing, piety, and devoutness."[2]

The event of Ashura and the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (‘a), his sons and other companions were the other important matters preached by Imam Al-Rida (‘a). It was only for keeping the memories of Karbala alive in the minds of the people in a way co–ordinating with the mission of Imam Hussain (‘a) to which he devoted his life. The reason behind it was to build an emotional link between the feelings of the people and the event of Karbala and provoke the feeling of revolution in them against the cruel governments.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said of Imam Hussain (‘a) and his companions' trouble:

"Certainly the day of Hussain's (‘a) trouble hurt our eyelashes; let our tears roll down our cheeks, and it degraded our beloved ones. Those who weep should weep over the likes of Hussain (‘a) for surely, weeping over him does away with one's great sins."[3]

Also Imam Al-Rida (‘a) established the wish in the hearts of the people to be among the companions of Imam Hussain (‘a). He encouraged the people because this was something which would establish the revolutionary mentality against the cruel governments. He said in this regard: "If you desire that, for you will be the reward equivalent to that of those martyred along with Hussain (‘a); then whenever you remember him say: 'Oh! Would that I had been with

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1. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 65:158; **al-Ihtijaj**, 2:237; **Tafsir al-Imam al-‘Askari**, p. 313.
2. Al-Saduq, **Sifat al-Shi'ah**, p. 4.
3. **Manaqib Aal Abi Talib**, 4:93; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 8:95; **Iqbal al-A'amal**, 3:28. **Al-Amali**, al-Saduq, pp. 190-191.

them! A great achievement would I have achieved."[1]

Moreover, Imam Al-Rida ('a) encouraged the people to go on a pilgrimage to Imam Hussain's ('a) holy shrine so that they could feel the courageous soul of the martyrs in them and promise that they would always rise against deviations, cruelty and aversion. He said of the pilgrimage of Imam Hussain ('a):

"Going on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Imam Hussain ('a) is equal to the accepted smaller pilgrimage to Makkah."[2]

Calling for mourning for Imam Hussain ('a) and going to his shrine for pilgrimage meant nothing but a peaceful revolt. On the other hand, it was a means of bringing the followers of the Household ('a) on one platform within no time without this being noticed by the government or the rulers, because apparently they gathered only for pilgrimage and mourning for Imam Hussain ('a) and had no aim other than performing pilgrimage. Finally these gatherings turned out to be very useful, because the roots of all revolts against the government of Al-Ma'mun were in the same gatherings.[3]

In this manner, Imam Al-Rida ('a) was successful in widening the limitations of love for the Household ('a) without facing any political restrictions or being noticed by the government or governmental officials. He was successful in attracting people such as the viziers, commanders of the army and jurisprudents – who were near the governmental officials and rulers – who informed the Imam ('a) of the events and decisions made by the rulers.

As we mentioned above, Imam Al-Rida ('a) performed all his actions in the most secretive manner. Therefore, no revolt took place in the time of Harun and his son Muhammad(al-Ameen) because after the defeat of the previous revolts, such as the revolt of Fakh etc. the companions of the Household ('a) resolved to make new military

1. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 44:284; **al-Amali**, al-Saduq, p. 193; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 1:269.
2. **Thawab al-A'amal**, al-Saduq, p. 86; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 98:29; **Kamil al-Ziarat**, p. 291.
3. **Maqatil al-Talibin**, pp. 346-347.

plans and strengthen their structure for the future, and apparently took no interest in military movements later.

SECTION FOUR

Chapter One
Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and regency

Chapter Two
Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) activities after regency

Chapter Three
University, revolts and Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) heritage

CHAPTER ONE
IMAM AL–RIDA (AS) AND REGENCY

In this chapter various phases must be studied and analyzed.

The Political Events Occurring before Regency

After five years' bloody war which shed the blood of thousands of soldiers and commanders, Al-Ma'mun was successful in taking charge of the government. The Abbasid caliphate was divided into two parts; the first one confirming the rule of Al-Ma'mun while the second group insisted on the rule remaining in the hands of al-Ameen.

The Imamah of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had passed its fourth year and now the political conditions were almost in its favour. Since the Imam (‘a) had a direct relation with governmental officials and the commanders, he could speak without any fear and now he could loosen the boundaries of his activities as compared to the past.

Al-Ma'mun, who had taken the charge of government as the inheritance from his father and forefathers, except in some fields, followed the path of his father and forefathers in all fields of his government. Like the caliphs before him, he too had made his caliphate something holy; therefore, the letters sent to him contained words full of holiness and sanctity. Among these letters was the letter written to him by Tahir ibn Hussain which read: “God killed that deposed one and made him suffer from his betrayal and perjury. He provided the commander of the faithful (s) with the affair [of the caliphate] and everything was done in the way the commander of the faithful wanted. All praise belongs to Allah who returned the right [of the caliphate] back to the commander of the faithful; who showed His enmity against the enemies of the commander of the faithful; who replaced dispersion with empathy and solidarity; who changed the dispersion of Ummah into unity and who revived the signs of the

religion in his [Al-Ma'mun's] hands after it being forgotten."[1]

Despite all these attempts and with all tricks been used to legalize the government of Al-Ma'mun and give it sanctity with the help of some jurisprudents and judges favouring the government of Al-Ma'mun, most of the people believed that Al-Ma'mun had snatched the caliphate from the holy Imams ('a). On the other hand, being suppressed by the cruel Abbasid ruler for a long time and seeing that these rulers were going against the Islamic laws, the revolutionaries revolted against them. Also a group of al-Ameen's companions declared revolt against Al-Ma'mun's government. As a result, a number of revolts came into being during Al-Ma'mun's reign.

The first year of Al-Ma'mun's caliphate (198 A.H.) witnessed the revolt of Nasr ibn Shayth Aqeeli in Halab, who also overcame some cities near Halab. His revolt continued till 199 A.H. Then he was defeated and his revolt ended.[2]

In the same year, chaos between Nazarians and Yamanians occurred in Mosul which ended after six thousand Nazarians were killed.

In 199 A.H. there was another battle between Bani Tha'laba and Bani Uthama[3]

This year was the beginning of a great revolution under the leadership of the Alawides.

At first Abu Saraya, Sari ibn Mansur Shaybani, accompanied by Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Isma'il Hassani, declared his revolt in Iraq. He coined in his name and spread his soldiers as far as the cities of Basra, Wasit and their surroundings.

As a result of this revolt different fronts came into being such as:

He appointed al-Abbas ibn Muhammad ibn Isa Ja'fari governor over Basra.

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1. **Tarikh al-Ya'qubi**, 2:442; **Al-Wafi bil Wafiyat**, 8:182.
2. **Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:297-388, (the events of 198 A. H.); **Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah**, 10:265, 278, 282 and 287.
3. **al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:300 to 301.

He appointed al-Hussain ibn al-Hassan al-Aftas governor over Makkah.

He appointed Ibrahim ibn Imam Musa ibn Ja'far ('a) governor over Yemen.

He appointed Isma'il ibn Musa ibn Ja'far ('a) governor over Fars.

He appointed Zayd ibn Musa ibn Ja'far ('a) governor over Ahwaz.

He appointed Muhammad ibn Sulaiman ibn Dawood ibn Hassan ibn Hassan ('a) governor over Ctesiphon (mada'in).

This large revolt lasted one year and until it was finally suppressed by the government.[1]

Muhammad ibn Imam Ja'faral-Sadiq ('a) declared his revolt in 200 A.H. but soon surrendered and was taken to Al-Ma'mun.[2]

The Alawids' revolts played a vital role in internal dispersion, political decisions and the military positioning of the Abbasid caliphate.

In 201 A.H. the people of Baghdad became disorganized to such an extent that Baghdad was near to ruin. Most people left their houses due to looting, high prices, imprisonment and the destruction of their houses.[3]

At last Al-Ma'mun forgave and guaranteed the lives of the Alawides who had taken part in revolts. However, we must not forget that this forgiveness does not mean that he did not frighten or kill them. Like the caliphs before him, Al-Ma'mun also tried to remove those people complaining about his government. For this, he used the method of terrorising and targeted killing. He killed Harthama ibn A'een although Harthama was very sincere. Hassan ibn Suhail – a rival of Harthama – conspired and provided the basic grounds for his

1. **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:315, the events of 199 A. H. and 200 A. H. **Tarikh al-Tabari**, 7:130; **Tarikh ibn Khaldon**, 3:245.
2. **Tarikh Baghdad**, 14:200; **Wafiyat al-Ayaan**, 6:153; **Morouj al-Thahab**, 4:27.
3. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:220; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:224-225.

removal.[1]

Al-Ma'mun did not allow anyone to say anything against him or his government. He banished one of the poets to Sindh. The only crime the poet had committed was that he had complained about one of the unjust judges in his verses.[2]

In addition to the internal disorder and dispersion, the external and foreign powers were also recognized as a great danger to the Abbasid government. The non–Muslims and dualist governments were always looking for any means to destroy the Muslim government. One of the reasons behind Al-Ma'mun's forgiveness for the leaders of the above–mentioned revolts was the danger which he was facing from the foreign powers.

Imam Al-Rida's ('a) Political Positioning

The battle between Al-Ma'mun and his brother al-Ameen for the post of caliphate and power, the consequences of this bloody battle, internal disorders and division of the members of the Abbasid family were the elements which prevented Al-Ma'mun to supervise Imam Al-Rida's ('a) activities and stop him from continuing his revolutionary activities. Imam Al-Rida ('a) was fully aware of the situation and therefore he made the use of the opportunity as much as he could and propagated the political thoughts and beliefs of the Household ('a) and strengthened his base among the people living throughout the Islamic World.

Like his father and forefathers ('a), Imam Al-Rida ('a) also supervised all the activities including the revolts against the government in the most secret manner. However, he had entrusted his brothers and cousins with the authority to run the programs. In this way, he had kept himself away from becoming a direct part of the revolts. Imam ('a) was very aware that if he directly took part in the revolts and battles, he would be killed in any fight or by any officials before

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1. **Tarikh al-Tabari**, p. 130; **Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:315; **Tarikhibn Khaldon**, 3, p. 245.
2. **Morouj al-Thahab**, 4:27; **Tarikh Baghdad**, 14, p. 200; **Wafiyat al-A'yan**, 6:153.

he could prepare the ground for the Imamah and leadership of the next Imam (‘a).

Another benefit of not directly taking part in the revolts was that if there was any mistake, Imam (‘a) would not be blamed for it; the blame would be on those directly involved in the mission. During 199 A.H. – before the declaration of revolt against Al-Ma’mun– the companions of “Muhammad ibn Sulaiman Alawi” gathered in Madinah and asked him to send someone to the Imam (‘a) and request him to declare his revolt. Muhammad sent one of the requesters to the Imam (‘a). Imam (‘a) replied saying: “I will come to you after twenty days.”

They waited for some days. One the eighteenth day, the Abbasid army attacked them and neutralized their revolt at the start.[1]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) entrusted the commanders of the revolts with complete authority and supervised the revolts in secret. Because of some special political conditions, the Muslims thought that Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had no relation with the revolts and the revolutionary people. When Muhammad ibn Ja’farSadiq (‘a) decided to declare his revolt on a fixed day, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said to him: “Do not declare your revolt tomorrow. If you do so, you will be defeated and your people will be killed.”[2]

The above–mentioned story clearly shows that Imam Al-Rida (‘a) supervised all revolutionary events and did not let anyone know anything about it.

It was now two years since Al-Ma’mun had taken over the Caliphate. In 200 A.H. he wrote a letter to Al-Rida (‘a) and invited him to Khurasan.[3] However, Al-Rida (‘a) refused for several reasons. Al-Ma’mun did not stop here and kept on insisting until Al-Rida (‘a) was convinced that he was not going to stop. So he accepted his invitation.

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:224-225; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:220.
2. **Al-Kafi**, 1:491; **Manaqib Aal Abi Talib**, 4:368; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:57.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:159; **Tarikh al-Tabari**, 7:132; **Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:319.

Al-Ma'mun instructed Imam Al-Rida ('a)'s guards not to bring him by the way of Kufah and Qum. Therefore, he was taken to Marwby way of Basra, Ahwaz and Fars. When he arrived in Marw, Al-Ma'mun told him to accept the ranks of Divine Leadership and Caliphate. However, Al-Rida ('a) refused this. Al-Ma'mun continued to press him. This kept on for two months, until after many discussions Al-Ma'mun suggested Al-Rida ('a) accept the post of the successor to the throne and indirectly threatened him that if he refused the post, he would kill him. The Imam ('a) accepted and told him: "I will only accept this upon conditions that I will state." Then Al-Ma'mun said: "State your conditions." Then Al-Rida ('a) said: "I will accept the succession to the throne upon the conditions that I neither issue any orders, nor do I admonish against anything; I neither judge, nor change anything; that I be excused from all such affairs.[1] "Then Al-Ma'mun accepted this. He accepted all his conditions and Imam Al-Rida ('a) was made successor to the crown on the fifth day of the holy month of Ramadan in 201 A.H."[2]

Al-Ma'mun's Motive behind the Imam's ('a) Succession to the Crown

When Al-Ma'mun made Imam Al-Rida ('a) successor to the crown, it was not because he had a feeling of love towards the Household ('a) because hunger for power and government dominates every kind of love and relationship; and Al-Ma'mun was no exception. His claim [of loving the Household ('a) was a white lie and his inclination towards them was also a deceit and hypocritical.[3] Obviously, Al-Ma'mun's love for the Household ('a) would be satisfactory and believable only if he withdrew himself from the post of caliphate and handed over it to Imam Al-Rida ('a) which was unlikely. How could one imagine that a person who shed the blood of thousands of soldiers, commanders, his own brother and many people of his family

1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:160-161; **Al-Kafi**, 1, p. 489; **Al-Irshad**, ShaykhAl-Mufid, 2:259-260.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 1:168-274; **Tarikh al-Tabari**, 7:139; **Al-Kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:326.
3. **Shatharat al-Thahab**, 2:70.

to come into power as caliph let another person come and possess it only because of having a strong feeling of respect for him! The same was the case with Al-Ma'mun and Imam Al-Rida ('a).

Therefore, the reason behind making Imam Al-Rida ('a) the successor to the crown was based on certain policies. Al-Ma'mun merely wanted to ensure the safety of his family and government through this means. That is why we see that when Al-Ma'mun found that Imam Al-
Rida ('a) was not responding to his offer and was refusing it again and again, he thought of another plan and started threatening him with death – first in indirect ways and afterwards blatantly. However, it was not too long before Al-Ma'mun killed the Imam ('a), although he had accepted his offer. This is what makes his hypocrisy and false respect towards the Household ('a) clear to all. Here we will mention the motive of Al-Ma'mun behind making Imam Al-Rida ('a) successor to the crown:

1. Reducing Tension within the Society

During the time of Al-Ma'mun, great tension and disorder could be observed in society. After having defeated his brother in a bloody war and coming into power as caliph, Al-Ma'mun started facing unexpected revolts including the revolts of the Alawides. On the other hand, the enemies of the government had spread all over the Islamic world. Al-Ma'mun defined his age in the following words:

"By God, I suppressed Bani Qays using the total wealth of the treasury so that even one dirham did not remain within it. But [O people of] Yemen [be aware that] I did not like them, neither did they like me. Bani Qudha'a also did not listen to my words, because their important men were waiting for Sufyani and his government so as to follow him. Bani Rabi'a are also the same because from the time when God raised his Prophet (s) from Bani Mudhar and sent him to guide the people, they have been fighting against God."[1]

On the other hand, the armed and political revolts had worried

1. **Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:432- 433; **Tarikh al-Tabari**, 7:212.

everyone. Having asked the courts, Al-Ma'mun discovered that the number of people killed fighting against Abu Saray's revolt had exceeded two hundred thousand.[1]

These problems made Al-Ma'mun convince or compel Imam Al-Rida ('a) to accept the succession to the crown and bring him close to himself. It was the only way to attract the companions of the Imam ('a) and put an end to their revolts. If Al-Ma'mun was able to control and attract the attention of the Alawides, he would have a chance of suppressing the other revolutionaries whose number was very few compared with the Alawides'. When Al-Ma'mun saw with his own eyes how the large group of learned men, jurisprudents and narrators of Hadiths – who exceeded twenty four thousand in Neyshabur[2] alone – welcomed Imam Al-Rida ('a), he decided to bring most of the Muslims who had a strong emotional and spiritual link with Imam Al-Rida ('a) to his own side; especially the people of Khurasanwho had helped him occupy the city of Baghdad.

On the other hand, by bringing the Imam ('a) onto his side and making him part of his government, he could put an end to the enmity of the people and leave them with no chance of snatching the government out of his hands and compelling them to stop their revolts against the rulers.

2. Legalizing his Government

According to the Muslims, a government becomes legal only when an explicit text of the Prophet (s) or the holy Imams ('a) is found concerning it, or when the ruler is selected by the prominent members of the community, or when he is selected according to the previous ruler with the condition of being accepted by all the people – and when it has also been accepted by the jurisprudents. Certainly, a group of jurisprudents confirmed the government and caliphate of Al-Ma'mun. However, their confirmation was either based on their greed or their fear of the king, or they bowed before the government of Al-

1. **Maqatil al-Talibin**, p. 366.
2. **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:1003, Al-**Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah**, 2:595; **Noor al-Absar**, p. 236; **Yanabi'a al-Mawaddah**, 3:123.

Ma'mun only because they did not have the power to remove it.

Al-Ma'mun did not have any of the above–mentioned qualities with the help of which he could legalize his government. Therefore, he announced his allegiance to Imam Al-Rida ('a) and handed over his government and power to him to legalize his government in the eyes of the Muslims who all strongly believed in the Imam ('a). However, when the Imam ('a) rejected taking charge of government, Al-Ma'mun invited him to accept succession to the crown. This time his offer was more like a pressure or threat. He compelled the Imam ('a) to accept his offer and the Imam ('a) had no other option but to act according to Al-Ma'mun's wish.

Imam Jawad ('a) said of Imam Al-Rida's ('a) fame:

"Like his friends and companions, his enemies were also satisfied with him; this was something which his father and forefathers ('a) did not enjoy. Therefore, only he was called "Al-Rida (satisfactory person)" among all Imams ('a)."[1]

According to Al-Ma'mun and many Muslims, acceptance of the post of succession to the crown by Imam Al-Rida ('a) meant the legality of Al-Ma'mun as ruler; and it was a call for all the people not to revolt against his government. As a result, the Islamic Ummah who were intellectually and emotionally the followers of Imam Al-Rida ('a), when saw him accepting the mentioned post, were satisfied with the government of Al-Ma'mun, accepting it to be legal and according to Islamic laws.

3. Preventing Imam Al-Rida ('a) from Calling the People to himself

It is crystal clear that an infallible Imam ('a) is responsible for developing an intellectual and social relationship between the people and their Imam ('a) whose Imamah is confirmed by the explicit words of the Prophet (s). Also he has the responsibility of calling the people towards the right path. Imam Al-Rida ('a) was no exception. He never

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1. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:4; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 1:22; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:88.

missed a chance to perform his duty. Al-Ma'mun tried his best to prevent the Imam ('a) from calling people towards himself and spreading his word, but he was not able to succeed. However, if he made the Imam ('a) his successor, then the Imam ('a) would call the people first towards the ruler and then to himself. Al-Ma'mun himself talked about his plan saying: "When this man [Imam Al-Rida ('a)] was away, he called the people towards himself [as Imam]. I appointed him to the post of succession to the crown to call the people towards me."[1]

4. Isolating the Imam ('a) from his Companions

Keeping the Imam ('a) to himself as part of the government was a means for Al-Ma'mun to isolate him and stop him from meeting his companions. As a result, the people would consult the representatives of Imam Al-Rida ('a) instead of meeting him. These representatives were well spread all over the Islamic world. It was a means of not letting the people ask the Imam ('a) directly about their problems. The result of all this was that Imam Al-Rida's ('a) meetings – though very few – were kept under observation. For this, Al-Ma'mun appointed Hisham ibn Ibrahim Rashidi, supposedly to serve Imam Al-Rida ('a). He was the doorkeeper of the Imam ('a). He always tried to be with Imam Al-Rida ('a). Performing his duty, he reported to Al-Ma'mun everything about the Imam ('a). He stopped many of the Imam's ('a) companions from meeting him and informed Al-Ma'mun of whatever he heard about him.[2]

5.Immunity of his government

In a time when a deadly battle had been fought between Al-Ma'mun and his brother al-Ameen as well as when a number of revolts had come into being against Al-Ma'mun's governments, Imam Al-Rida ('a) had gained much fame among the Muslims who had gathered around him. Certainly this was a great danger to Al-Ma'mun's government. Even Al-Ma'mun himself confessed to this and said: "I

1. **Fara'id al-Simtain**, 2:214; **Dalai'l al-Imamah**, p. 379; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2, 181.
2. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:139; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:164-165.

was afraid that if I left him do whatever he wanted, it would turn out to be a danger for me and we would face such trouble from him that we would not be able to repel it."[1]

6. To Defame the Imam (‘a)

Perhaps the most evil motive of Al-Ma'mun was to defame the Imam (‘a) through the means of succession to the crown. For this, he had appointed some spies. However, the Imam (‘a) was fully aware of Al-Ma'mun's objectives which he manifested saying: "[O Al-Ma'mun!] By doing this you want the people to say: certainly Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) is not among those who renounced the world, but rather he is among those whom the world renounced. Do you not see how he has he accepted the post of succession to the crown as a way to the caliphate?"[2]

When among his relatives and members of the Abbasid family, Al-Ma'mun mentioned a number of his evil motives for choosing Imam Al-Rida (‘a) as successor to the crown. For example, he said: "I am about to decrease his dignity slowly and steadily in the eyes of the people and make the people believe that he is not fit for the post of caliphate."[3]

7. Crushing the Frontline of the Opponent

When Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was made successor to the crown and some of his brothers and cousins were appointed governors and walis of different Islamic countries – such as Imam's (‘a) two brothers Abbas and Ibrahim, who were made the governors of Kufah and Yemen[4] respectively, those against the government started believing that Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was a direct part of the government.

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1. **Fara'id al-Samatain**, 2:214; **Dalal al-Imamah**, p. 379; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a),** 2:181-182.
2. **'Ilal al-Shari'a**, p. 238; **Amali, Saduq**, p. 126; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:129.
3. **Fara'id al-Samatain**, 2:214-215; **Dalal al-Imamah**, p. 380; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2, 182.
4. **Tarikh Ibn Khaldon**, 3:247-248; **Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 7:342-350; **Tarikh al-Tabari**, 7:143-149.

Due to this the enemies of the government had to turn against the companions of the Imam (‘a), because in the case of revolt, they had to fight against Alawide governor who would suppress them. This would, of course, result in the defeat of the enemies of the government. Al-Ma’mun had planned everything very carefully before he handed over the position to Imam Al-Rida (‘a) of successor to the crown. He thereby intended to achieve yet another target, too. He wanted to blame the Alawides for every mistake in his governmental system. In doing this, he would succeed in attracting the people's support; he would also break the frontline of his enemies and would relate any mistake to those companions of the Imam (‘a) who were now in different governmental posts; most important of all, he would destroy the Imam’s (‘a) personality.

The Reasons behind Accepting the Imam’s (‘a) Succession to the Crown

Al-Ma’mun said to Imam Al-Rida (‘a):”O son of Allah's Messenger, I have realized your excellence, your knowledge, your asceticism, your piety, and your acts of worship; therefore, I see that you are more appropriate for the caliphate than me.”

The Imam (‘a) answered him: “By renouncing the world I hope for salvation from the evil of the world; by refraining from the unlawful I wish to win good end results; through humility in the world I hope for exaltation with Allah.”

“I have seen that I must remove myself from the caliphate and have entrusted it to you, “Al-Ma’mun said.

The Imam (‘a) said to him: “If this caliphate belongs to you, then it is not permissible for you to take off the garment in which Allah has clothed you and to give it to another instead of yourself. If the caliphate does not belong to you, then it is not permissible for you to give me that which does not belong to you.”

Al-Ma’mun said: “There is no escape for you in accepting this matter.”

“I will never willingly do that”, retorted the Imam (‘a).

Al-Ma’mun was insistant. However, it was in vain, as the Imam (‘a)

was not accepting. Al-Ma'mun therefore offered the Imam (‘a) succession to the crown, saying: "Now that you are unwilling to accept the post of caliphate and do not want me to pledge my allegiance to you as caliph, accept succession to the crown, so you will become the next caliph."

Then a conversation took place between them, and the Imam (‘a) said something which made Al-Ma'mun very angry. He said: "You always face me with what I hate! You have felt safe from my power! I swear by Allah, you should accept regency or I will force you to (accept) it! You should do that; otherwise, I will strike your head off!"

The Imam (‘a) said: "Certainly my Allah the Honorable, the High, will keep me safe from suffering a self–inflicted death. So do as you wish and I will accept it, but I have some conditions, such as: I would not appoint anyone as a governor; I would not dismiss anyone; I would not abolish any rite and I would be a distant al-*Tabarsi, I'lam al-Wara bi–A'lam al-Huda*adviser in affairs of the state."

Al-Ma'mun was pleased and accepted the Imam (‘a) as successor to the crown; despite his wish.[1]

There is another tradition which says: "Al-Ma'mun said to Imam Al-Rida (‘a): "Umar ibn al-Khattab nominated a board of six members one of whom was your grandfather the commander of the faithful Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a). Then Umar said that they should all agree unanimously on the next caliph and he ordered any person to be killed whose opinion differed from the rest of the group. Therefore you must accept what I am offering you and there is no way to deny this."[2]

When the people asked or complained about Imam Al-Rida (‘a) for accepting the post of succession to the crown, he would answer them saying: "Indeed God knows how much I hated this. However when I was given the choice of either accepting it or being killed, I chose this (acceptance of succession to the throne) over being killed. Woe be to

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1. **'Ilal al-Shari'a**, pp. 237-238; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:151-152; **Amali**, Saduq, p. 125-127.
2. **Irshad**, Shaykh al-Mufid, 2:259 -260; al-Tabarsi, **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:72; **Maqatil al-Talibin**, p. 375.

them! Do they not know that Joseph (‘a), who was a prophet (‘a), said the following to the King of Egypt when it was necessary: “Set me over the store–houses of the land: I will indeed guard them, as one that knows (their importance).

‘I was also forced to accept this even though I did not like to. I unwillingly accepted it when I was about to be killed. I accepted this affair as one who has no interest in it. And I will take my complaint to God on this issue and seek His assistance.”[1]

When the Imam (‘a) was asked: “What made you accept the succession to the throne?” he said: “the same thing which made my grandfather the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) accept taking part in the council [of Umar ibn Khattab].”[2]

It is necessary to mention here that actually Imam Al-Rida (‘a) did not accept Al-Ma’mun's offer to save his own life, but because he was sure that if he were killed, many problems would come into being such as:

1.The divine and revolutionary movements would face irreparable losses;

2.Chaos and disorder would take over among the peopleand affect Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) position and would be the start of his companions and family members being killed;

3.A number of revolts would come into being in the name of vengeance, the result of which would be nothing but disturbances in the military system of the country and which would play no important role in future events.

These were some of the reasons why Imam Al-Rida (‘a) accepted succession to the throne. It was a time when he had to benefit from every single opportunity for the revival of the forgotten traditions, removal of the innovations in religion, preparation of the people,

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:150-151; **Amali**, Saduq, p. 130-131; **'Ilal al-Shari'a**, 1:239.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:152; **Manaqib Aal-Abi-Talib**, 3:473; al-Majlisi, **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:140.

nullifying the programs and plans of Al-Ma'mun which he had planned for the future and the rectification of wrong ideas and beliefs.

Imam's ('a) Benefiting from Opportunities

When Imam Al-Rida ('a) observed the conditions under which he was now living and which had brought him relative freedom, he started activities in the following fields:

1. Practising religion and the revival of tradition

The Imam ('a) and his companions had an excellentopportunity to preach the religion, revive the tradition of the Prophet (s) and spread the methods and manners of the holy Household ('a) in all political and social areas. The Imam ('a) was at the court of Al-Ma'mun and therefore had plenty of occasionto make connections with Al-Ma'mun's ministers, commanders and relatives. The Imam's ('a)brothers were also playing important roles in other cities as leaders. Moreover, his companions were active in revolutionary undertakingsall over the Islamic world. Indicating this, Imam Al-Rida ('a) prayed in the court of Allah:

"O God, You protect me from endangering my life and [You know that] I was forced to accept succession to the throne. If I had not accepted it, Abdullah Al-Ma'mun would have killed me.

O God, [I know and I believe that] there is no promise but only Your promise and all guardianships are from You. Therefore make me successful in practicing Your religion and help me in reviving the traditions of Your Prophet (s) because You are the best helper and You are the best guardian."[1]

Under these conditions, the Imam ('a) would provide Al-Ma'mun's ministers, jurisprudents and the followers of other religions with the most appropriate answers; these people gathered around him in order to discuss religious matters with him and because they were commanded by Al-Ma'mun to do so. On the other hand, the Imam

1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 1:29; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:93; al-Majlisi, **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:131.

(‘a)also helped Al-Ma’mun in solving different difficult matters.

2. Preparation of forces

After the Alawides were defeated in their revolts against Al-Ma’mun's government, the conditions were in their favour as they were no longer hounded by the government. The revolutionaries made use of this opportunity and once again started to gather forces to prepare themselves for another revolt against the government when the right time came. Obviously, this would have been unachievable without the Imam’s (‘a) acceptance of succession to the throne.

3. Foiling Al-Ma’mun's plans

Had Imam Al-Rida (‘a) not accepted succession to the throne, Al-Ma’mun would not have compelled him to accept the post and would not even have tried to kill him; but on the other hand, he would have thought of a plan more dangerous than this. He would choose someone else from among the family of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) for the post with one of the following three qualities:

A.He might be a dealer and opportunist;

B.He might be a sincere person but with less intelligence and understanding;

C.He might be a sincere person but one not easily removed from the luxuries and deceitful atmosphere of power and government.

In all three cases, the presence of such a person would create a crack in the line of companions of the Household (‘a), it would cause the Alawides to become involved in affairs which would defame them, and would make them responsible for every mishap in the government. It was also possible that such a person would fight Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and capture his companions and friends.

By accepting the succession to the throne, the Imam (‘a) did not permit Al-Ma’mun to work on his plans against the Household (‘a).

4. Correction of incorrect political thought

At the time of Imam Al-Rida (‘a), most people had started believing that politics were set apart from religion. According to them, it was

not suitable for Imams (‘a) and jurisprudents to take part in politics. They believed that the real standard for virtue was to show no political inclination. The Abbasid caliphs played a very active role in spreading and preaching this belief among the Muslims. By accepting the post of succession to the throne, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) decided to remove this false idea from the people's minds and make them understand that under favourable conditions, it is one of an Imam’s duties to take governmental control and perform his duties in all religious, political and social fields.

Thus Imam Al-Rida (‘a) accepted the post of succession to the throne at such a time when most Muslims thought it was unfair. One day one of the Imam’s (‘a) companions visited him and said to him: “O son of the Apostle (‘a), the people are remarking that despite displaying asceticism towards the world, you have accepted the post of succession to the throne!”[1]

Obviously it was something which the Imam (‘a) could not answer merely withwords, but to prove the common people were wrong in this regard, he had to show them practical examples as to why he had accepted the post of succession to the throne and had come to power.

The Way of pledging Allegiance

When Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had accepted succession to the throne, Al-Ma’mun called upon his relatives and other important people such as his ministers, amirs, doorkeepers, secretaries and other prominent people. Then he asked “Fadhl ibn Sahl” to announce and make them aware of Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) succession. Also he ordered Fadhl ibn Sahl to ask them to wear green clothing instead of black – which was the sign for the Abbasids. Then he gave them their salary for one year and asked them to leave.

After one week, the people gathered. Everyone sat in their appropriate seats. Al-Ma’mun also sat in his. Then Imam Al-Rida (‘a) entered. He was dressed in green and wearing a turban and a sword. Then Al-

1. **'Ilal al-Shari'a**, p. 239; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:150; **Amali**, Saduq, p. 130.

Ma'mun ordered his son, al-Abbas, to be the first to make the pledge of allegiance to him. [Abbas stretched out his hand to swear his oath of allegiance to the Imam (‘a)] and the Imam (‘a) put his hand on Abbas' hand.

“Stretch out your hand for the pledge of allegiance.” Al-Ma'mun demanded.

“The Apostle of Allah may Allah bless him and his family, used to make the pledge in this way when the people pledged allegiance to him”, remarked Al-Rida (‘a).”

Al-Ma'mun said: “Do as you will.”

Then gifts were distributed among the people. Orators and poets rose and began to mention his great merit and summoned the people to pledge allegiance to him. Then Al-Ma'mun requested Imam Al-Rida (‘a) to stand up and deliver a speech. The Imam (‘a) stood, praised Allah and his messenger (s) and then said:

“O people, we have a right due to us from you through the Messenger of Allah (s), and you also have a right due to you from us through him. If you carry out your duty to us, then it is necessary for us to carry out our duty to you.”[1]

Then Al-Ma'mun went into the pulpit and said: “O people, you have come to know about the pledge of allegiance to Ali ibn Musa ibn Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (‘a). By Allah, if I recited these names before the deaf and the dumb, they would recover with the permission of Allah, the Great and Almighty.”[2]

The Imam (‘a) knew that the post of his succession to the throne would not work out. He looked at one of his close associates, who was feeling happy about what had happened. He signalled him to come closer. He went closer to him, and he said so that no one else could

1. **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:73-74; **Irshad**, Shaykh al-Mufid, 2:261-262; Ibn al-Sabbagh, **al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:1006-1007; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:146.
2. **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, p. 147.

hear: "Do not occupy your heart with this matter and do not be happy about it. It is something which will not be achieved."[1]

Imam's ('a) prediction was right as he passed from the world before Al-Ma'mun.

Some extractions from Al-Ma'mun's textual document

Al-Ma'mun himself wrote the textual document regarding Imam Al-Rida's ('a) succession to the throne. He mentioned the reason for choosing Imam Al-Rida ('a) saying: "I have chosen Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida ibn Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) for succession to the throne. This is because I have seen his brilliant excellence, his plain knowledge, his manifest piety, his pure asceticism, his renouncing the world, and his being safe from the people. I have clearly come to know that reports, tongues, and words have unanimously agreed upon this. Besides, I still know his excellence in his youth and adulthood, and hence I have appointed him as my successor after me." Then he continued, saying: "The commander of the faithful ('a) summoned his sons, the members of his house, his personal entourage (khassa), his commanders, and his servants, and they with pleasure have pledged allegiance to Al-Rida ('a)."[2]

Imam Al-Rida ('a) also wrote on the other side of textual document

Imam Al-Rida ('a) wrote on the other side of the textual document written by Al-Ma'mun: "and that he has entrusted his regency and the great authority to me if I remain (alive) after him, so I have accepted this post because I feared that the religion would be scattered, the cord of the Muslims would be broken, as the affairs of the pre–Islamic pagan age were close (to him), an opportunity might be seized, and calamity might swifty occur."

"And I have appointed Allah (as witness) over my own soul if He

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1. **Irshad**, Shaykh al-Mufid, 2:263 (taken from: mada'ini Tarikh nigar); **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:74; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:147 (taken from: **Irshad**, Shaykh al-Mufid, 2:263); **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, p. 258.
2. Ibid, p. 258.

makes me take care of the authority over the Muslims and vests me with His vicegerency to work among them. I will rule them through obedience to Him and to His Messenger (s). I will not shed forbidden blood; nor will I make lawful pudenda nor property except that which is shed by the punishments prescribed by Allah and made lawful by the religious duties issued from Him, and I will do my best and all in my power to choose the most qualified persons…"

"And if I originated or changed or altered, I would be worthy of being changed and liable to severe punishment, and I seek refuge in Allah from His wrath, and I do not know what will be done to me and you, surely the judgment is Allah's; He relates the truth and He is the best of the deciders."[1]

With these strong words Imam Al-Rida ('a) made the Muslims understand the political method suitable for an Islamic ruler and his role in practising the religious laws, the elements which caused dismissal from his post.

Al-Ma'mun and Imam Al-Rida's ('a) textual documents were written on the seventh day of the holy month of Ramadan in 201 A.H.[2]

Al-Ma'mun's orders after he pledged his allegiance to Imam Al-Rida ('a)

After Imam Al-Rida's ('a) announcement as successor to the throne, Al-Ma'mun ordered all members of Abbasid family to abandon their black clothes – which was the sign of the Abbasid family – and wear green clothes, and then swear their allegiance to Imam Al-Rida ('a) as successor to the throne. Then he wrote letters to different Islamic cities. He also had dirhams and dinars struck with the name of Imam Al-Rida ('a) on them. When Al-Ma'mun's letter was received in Baghdad, some people accepted it, while some did not listen to it and

1. **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:1011-1012; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:128-129; al-Majlisi, **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:152; **Manaqib Al-Abi Talib**, 3:474.
2. **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:1010; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:127; al-Majlisi, **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:152.

rejected it.[1]

Al-Ma'mun put in jail those persons who abstained from pledging allegiance to the Imam ('a).[2]

The Abbasids of Baghdad refused Al-Ma'mun's pledge of allegiance to the Imam ('a) and complained about Al-Ma'mun. Instead they pledged allegiance to their leader Ibrahim ibn Mehdi who was in Baghdad.[3]

In Kufa, too, the people rejected Al-Ma'mun's order. The revolutionaries among them shouted:

"O Ibrahim! O the helped one! Al-Ma'mun does not deserve to be followed (and we are no more bound in pledging allegiance to him.)[4]

However, the people of Kufa could not continue their rejection and objection, because almost all the Islamic world had accepted Imam Al-Rida ('a) as successor to the throne and had pledged their allegiance to him. The Imam's ('a) succession to the throne was mentioned in the following words:

"Ali ibn Musa ibn Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) is the successor to the throne for the Muslims. [Then the following lines were also added:]

His father and forefathers ('a)were the best people who drank the water from the clouds [they were the best creation of Allah]."[5]

The events after allegiance was sworn to the Imam ('a)

After 23 days had passed following the textual document of Imam's ('a) regency, Al-Ma'mun asked the Imam ('a) to lead the 'Id prayer before the people and to deliver a sermon after the prayer, that

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1. **Al-kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:326; **Tarikh Tabari**, 7:139
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:161; al-Majlisi, **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:133.
3. **Al-kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:327; **Tarikh Tabari**, 7:139.
4. **Tarikh Tabari**, 7:144; **Al-kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:343.
5. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:157; Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:262-263; **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:1007.

the hearts of the populace might become assured through that and recognize his excellence, but the Imam (‘a) refused to respond to him saying: “You have come to know about the conditions made between us; I do not interfere in this affair; therefore, exempt me from saying the prayer before the people.”

“I only intend by this that the people's hearts should be assured and that they should know your great merit”, replied Al-Ma’mun

Al-Ma’mun insisted, so the Imam (‘a) was forced to respond to him, but he made it on condition that he should go out just as Allah's Apostle (s) and his grandfather the Commander of the faithful, Ali ibn Abu Talib (‘a) did.

“Go out as you wish”, replied Al-Ma’mun.

Then he ordered the military commanders and the rest of the people to receive Imam Al-Rida (‘a).

The people waited for the Imam in the roads and on rooftops. As for the military commanders, they were ready and wore their best uniforms. When the sun rose, the Imam (‘a) washed and put on a white turban. One end of it he hung over his holy breast and the other he hung between his shoulders. He took his staff in his hand. Then he went out in that humble state, raised his head towards heaven, and exclaimed four times: “Allah is great (Allahu akbar)!” Then he stood at the door and exclaimed four times: “Allah is great (Allahu akbar)!” Then he said: “Allah is great, for He has guided us! Allah is great, for He has given to us of the cattle quadrupeds! Praise belongs to Allah, for He has tried us!”

The great Imam (‘a) walked barefoot, stopped at every ten steps, and said four times: “Allah is great!” The people imagined that the sky, the earth, and the walls were answering him. As for Marw, it shook with weeping and clamour. Al-Ma’mun heard of this and became frightened and terrified. So al-Fadl ibn Sahl hurried to him and said to him: “O Commander of the faithful, if Al-Rida (‘a) reaches the place of prayer for the festival, the people will break out in rebellion. So send instructions to him to go back.”

Accordingly, Al-Ma’mun sent one of his police to the Imam (‘a) to ask him to go back, so the Imam (‘a) called for his boots and put them

on. Then he went back without delivering the prayer before the people."[1]

By this action, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) revived the tradition of the Prophet (s) which had been removed from the minds of the people. Moreover, he was successful in creating love for him in the hearts of the people. Even the commanders and soldiers of Al-Ma’mun were impressed by Imam’s (‘a) method.

The Benefits of Accepting Succession to the Throne

Whatever an Imam (‘a) does is for the benefit of Islam, the Muslims and the followers of the Household (‘a). Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was no exception. After he accepted the post of succession to the throne, some targets were achieved which could not have been achieved without this acceptance.

Here we will discuss some of the consequences:

1. Al-Ma’mun's Confession of the Legitimacy of the Household (‘a)

The Amawides and after them the Abbasids always tried to hide the virtues of the Household (‘a) by using the means of encouraging the people and threatening the people of the Household (‘a). However, when Imam Al-Rida (‘a) accepted the post of succession to the throne, the conditions changed. Now Al-Ma’mun clearly praised the Household (‘a) and mentioned the oppressions which they had faced from previous rulers.

Al-Ma’mun mentioned some facts in the letter which he had written replying to the letter of the Abbasids. He wrote: “None of the Muhajirin (emigrants) supported Allah's messenger (s) as Ali (‘a) did, for he helped him, protected him through his own soul, and slept on his bed… It is he who is the leader of the authority (wilaya) in the hadith of Ghadir Khum and concerned by these words of his (the Prophet), may Allah bless him and his family: “Your position with me

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:161-162. Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:264-265; **al-Kafi**, 1:489.

is as Harun had with Musa, except that there will be no prophet after me."

Another example of his exalted position and his great importance with the Prophet (s) is that he ordered all the doors facing his great mosque to be closed; he did not exclude any of them except Ali's, for this remained open and was not closed. Among his virtues was that he carried the standard on the Day of Khaybar, for it was he who conquered the stronghold of Khaybar and put an end to the Jews there, and killed Amru ibn Abd wud, of whom the Muslims were afraid and whom none of them fought against except the hero and protector of Islam, Imam Ali ('a).

Another example of the good traits of the Commander of the faithful ('a) is that when the Prophet (s) made the Muslims associate with each other as brothers, Ali was alone, so the Prophet (s) associated with him as his brother and said to him: "O Ali, you are my brother in this world and the next."

Then he started confessing about the oppressions and cruelty which the Abbasid rulers had exacted on the Household ('a). He said: "… Then we (the Abbasids) and they (the Umayyads) were like one hand just as you claim until Allah, the Exalted, decided on authority for us, so we terrified them (the Alawides), straightened them, and killed them more than the killing of the Umayyads toward them."[1]

On another occasion, Al-Ma'mun confirmed the virtues and superiority of Imam Ali ('a) over other people in the matter of caliphate. He discussed with jurisprudents in this regard who agreed with him about the matter. Among these jurisprudents was the famous judge Yahya ibn Aktham. He said, confirming Al-Ma'mun's sayings: "O commander of the faithful, you clarified the truth for those whom God has favoured and you have proved such a thing which is not deniable by anyone.'

The jurisprudents also followed Yahya's words and said: 'We all accepted the saying of the commander of the faithful and believe in

1. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:209-210; **al-Ta'rif fi Ma'rifat Mathahib al-Tawa'if**, p. 277.

what he has just said."[1]

In most of his gatherings, Al-Ma'mun mentioned the virtues of the Household ('a). He did this to encourage his other officials to follow him in praising the members of the Household ('a). On the other hand, he had given the companions of the Household ('a) a free hand to talk about their virtues and magnifications. Obviously, the caliph's behaviour caused the intellectual and spiritual base of the Household ('a) to be more and more widespread and stronger; it also increased the level of respect and honour for them. Al-Ma'mun confessed that Imam Al-Rida ('a) was the most superior and suitable person for the post of caliphate. He expressed these feelings among his family members, saying: "I analysed both the families of Abbas and Ali ('a) and did not find anyone in our time more suitable for the post of caliphate than Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida ('a)."[2]

2. Using the Propagative Means in Favour of Imam Al-Rida ('a)

Al-Ma'mun used all possible means in favour of Imam Al-Rida ('a) for positive activities which increased the Imam's ('a) fame and all the people – Muslims or non–Muslims – recognized him. The governors, amirs, preachers and the imams of Friday prayers would preach his name in their sermons; and coins were struck with his name on them all over the Islamic world. Preachers and poets who hada good opportunity to mention the virtues of the Imam ('a) and his forefathers ('a) did not miss it and took an active part by writing supportive poetry relating to his virtues. This was happening throughout the Islamic world. These conditions played a very important role in reinforcing the connection of the Muslims with their Imam ('a). We know that all these means were under the control of Al-Ma'mun and if the Imam ('a) had not accepted his offer for succession to the throne, it would not have been possible for the Imam ('a) to preach the Islamic teachings at such a high level.

Al-Ma'mun also praised the Imam ('a) in his poetry. After

1. **Al-'Iqd al-Farid**, 5:358-359.
2. **Morouj al-Thahab**, 4:34; **Al-kamil fi Tarikh**, 6:326; **Tarikh Tabari**, 7:139.

Imam's (‘a) regency, he wrote a piece of poetry about his virtues and merits, saying: "They reproach me for respecting and showing love to Abul Hassan [Imam Ali (‘a)] which according to me is one of the wonders of this age.

[He] is the best person; and he is the first person who helped the Prophet (s) both in secret and in public."

Also he wrote:

"Repentance of no–one is accepted; but only when it is accompanied by the love and friendship of [Ali] ibn Abi Talib;

He who is the brother of the Prophet (s) and the confederate of the guidance; [and obviously] the brother enjoys a higher post than friends and companions."[1]

This and other verses which Al-Ma'mun recited praising Imam Al-Rida (‘a) became fruitful in the latter years. Eight years after Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) martyrdom, Al-Ma'mun ordered that it be announced everywhere: "I do not consider him a Muslim who praises Mu'awiyah and beware that after the Prophet (s) only Ali (‘a) is the most superior of Allah's creatures."[2]

3. Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) Open Discussion with the Followers of Other Religions

Al-Ma'mun had given Imam Al-Rida (‘a) a free hand to mention his beliefs, thoughts and political ideas. He ordered Fadl ibn Sahl to bring the people of thoughts and different beliefs together to provide Imam Al-Rida (‘a) with grounds to express his ideas. He brought together a number of people consisting of Catholic archbishops, a chief rabbi, a Hindu high priest, followers of Zoroaster and Nestus the Roman medical scientist, and other theologians. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) discussed their writings with them and rejected their ideas with their own words. Finally, all of them admitted that the Imam (‘a)'s arguments were correct.

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1. **Tathkirat al-khawas**, 2:485-486 (taken from: Sauli, **kitab al-Awraq**).
2. **Tarikh al-Khulafa**, p. 247; **Al-kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:406-408; **Tarikh al-Tabari**, 7:187-188.

After a long discussion with Imam Al-Rida (‘a), the high priest addressed him, saying: “My view agrees with yours, and there is no god but Allah.”[1]

‘Imran Sabi'i, the leader of the Sabeans who was so skilful in the field of debate that no one could ever stand against his reasoning, accepted Islam after having a long session of discussion with Imam Al-Rida (‘a). He said: “I witness that Allah, the Most High, is as you have described, and witness that Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, is His servant sent with guidance and the religion of the truth.” Then he prostrated himself in prayer before Allah and submitted to Him. The religious scholars and theologians who had witnessed with their own eyes how ‘ImranSabi'iaccepted Islam did not dare to ask the Imam (‘a) any more questions.[2]

Then Al-Ma’mun held another session of debate between Imam Al-Rida (‘a) with a theologian from Khurasan , namely Sulaiman Marvazi. The Imam (‘a) agreed and entered into discussion with Sulaiman. They discussed different topics such as “the attributes of Allah” and “the difference between His essence and attributes of His deeds”. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) provided Sulaiman Marwazi with satisfactory answers to every question. The Imam (‘a) surpassed him with strong reasoning. Sulaiman could not reject Imam’s (‘a) ideas. At this time, Al-Ma’mun said to Sulaiman: “O Sulaiman! He is the most learned person of the Hashimides.”[3]

Al-Ma’mun arranged another session of discussion between Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and a group of scholars from different religions. Each of the scholars asked the Imam (‘a) questions, and the Imam (‘a) convinced each of them with his strong reasoning. One of the scholars was Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Jahm. He raised some questions about the infallibility of the Prophet (s) and the Imams (‘a) taking help from

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:139-145; **Al-Tawhid**, al-Saduq, pp. 417-424; **Al-Ihtijaj**, 2:199-206.
2. Tabarsi, **al-Ihtijaj**, 2:214; **Al-Tawhid**, al-Saduq, p. 440; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:157.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:159 to 168; **Al-Tawhid**, al-Saduq, pp. 441-454; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 10:329-338.

allegorical verses of the holy Qur'an. The Imam (‘a) proved the infallibility of the prophets (‘a) both on rational and traditional bases and removed the doubts from the mind of Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Jahm. Ali ibn Muhammad, who had now understood his mistake, wept and said : “Son of Allah's apostle (‘a), I am going to return to Allah, the Great and Almighty, in repentance and will never say after this day of mine anything about the prophets of Allah except what you have mentioned.”[1]

In another gathering Al-Ma’mun discussed the infallibility of the prophets (‘a) and referred to a number of allegorical verses in this regard. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) gave him satisfactory answers and interpreted the verses of the holy Qur'an in another manner. Al-Ma’mun said to Imam Al-Rida (‘a): “You have quenched my thirst, son of Allah's apostle (‘a), and have explained what was hidden from me.”[2]

Saduq believed that: “by managing debate sessions, Al-Ma’mun eagerly hoped that the people he invited might be able to surpass Al-Rida (‘a) in their debate and he might be able to make his deficiencies apparent to the people.”[3]

4. Propagation of the Household’s (‘a) Teachings and Virtues

Propagation of the Household’s (‘a) teachings and virtues demanded appropriate opportunities. For a long time, the rulers had been trying to hide the virtues of the Household (‘a) from the people. It was the very first time that Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had been given this opportunity. Therefore, he made the most of it and started preaching and propagating the virtues of the Household (‘a) among the people; in particular he preached it among jurisprudents, judges, commanders, ministers and those people who had connections with the court in one way or another. The Imam (‘a) mentioned the virtues of the

1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:170 to 173; **Al-Amali**, al-Saduq, pp. 150-153; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 11:72-74.
2. Tabarsi, **al-Ihtijaj**, 2:215-223; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:174; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 11:78-84.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:168.

Household (‘a) in the form of the traditions which he related which came from the Prophet (s). Some of these narrations are given below:

The Prophet (s) said: “After me Ali will be the leader of every faithful person.”[1]

The Imam (‘a) narrated that the Prophet (s) said: “O Ali, you are the divine proof of Allah, the door to Allah and the path to Allah. [O Ali] You are the big news, the right path and the great example.

O Ali, you are the leader of the Muslims, the commander of the faithful, the best successor and the truthful. O Ali, you are the separator of right from wrong. You are the truthful and trustworthy one your party is my party. My party is Allah's party and the party of your enemies is the party of Satan.”[2]

Also, he narrated from the Prophet (s) saying: “I sent Fatimah (‘a) to her husband's house only when Allah ordered me to do so.”[3]

Then the Imam (‘a) mentioned ten traditions and hadiths in this regard.

Al-Ma’mun arranged a debate which took place in the presence of a group of scholars from Iraq and Khurasan . Al-Ma’mun asked the scholars about the meaning of this verse:

﴿ثُمَّ أَوۡرَثۡنَا ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱصۡطَفَيۡنَا مِنۡ عِبَادِنَا﴾

“Then We gave the Book as an inheritance to those whom We chose from among Our servants.”[4]

“Surely those whom Allah chose were all Muslims”, retorted the scholars.

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:253-254; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 38:111.
2. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 38:111; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:9; **Yanabi’a al-Mawadah**, 3:402.
3. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 43:104; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:64.
4. *Surat Fatir, 35:32.*

Al-Ma'munturned to the Imam (‘a) and asked him: "What do you say, Abu al-Hasan?"

"I do not say as they said", replied the Imam (‘a), "but I say that Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, meant the pure family (of the Prophet sawas) peace be on them."

Then the Imam (‘a) recited twelve verses from the holy Qur'an which all indicated the virtues and greatness of the Household (‘a). Al-Ma'mun and other scholars praised Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) knowledge. Then Al-Ma'mun said: "May Allah bless you, the Household of the Prophet (‘a), with good rewards on behalf of the nation. Only you can remove our doubts about the matters with your interpretation, explanation and expression."[1]

Al-Ma'mun asked Imam Al-Rida (‘a) to tell him briefly about pure Islam. The Imam (‘a) mentioned Islamic theology along with Imamah saying: "[you must know that] after him [the Prophet sawas] his brother, administrator and companion Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) will be the leader and divine proof for the believers, guardian of affairs of the Muslims and the most knowledgeable of the holy Qur'an. He is the amir of the believers, leader of the pious people, commander of successful ones, the best of successors and heirs of the Prophet's (s) knowledge. It was he whose relation with the Prophet (s) was like Haron's relation to Musa (‘a). After him, his two sons Hassan and Hussain (‘a) are the leaders of the youth of paradise and the successors of the two great persons – the Prophet (s) and Ali (‘a)."

Then Imam Al-Rida (‘a) named the Imams (‘a) one by one saying: "he who dies without recognizing them, certainly has died the death of ignorance. Piety, pureness, truthfulness, reformation, steadiness [in Allah's way], striving [for performing their duties] and returning the credit to the creditor – whether good or evil – are among their qualities."[2]

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:207-217; **Al-Amali**, al-Saduq, pp. 615-626; **Bisharat al-Moustafa**, pp. 349-360.
2. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 10:353; **Tuhaf al-‘Uqul**, pp. 416; **'Uyun Akhbaral-Rida (‘a)**, 2:129-130.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said of the Imamah and the responsibilities of an Imam: “[certainly] Imamah is the growing and flourishing base of Islam. With the Imam’s (‘a) presence [and acceptance] of the Imam (‘a) the prayers, zakat, fasting, hajj and jihad are acceptable and reach the level of perfection. [Also with his presence] Khums and charity are collected, divine punishments are practised and the borders of the countries remain safe [from the enemies]. An Imam (‘a) declares what is halal (permissible) and what is haram (impermissible). He defends the religion of Allah. He guides [the people] on the [right and brilliant] path of Allah with his wise sayings, good advice and strong reasoning.”[1]

During his meetings with different people and while answering their questions, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) regularly mentioned the qualities of an Imam (‘a), the need for the oneness of an Imam in every era and the rights of an Imam (‘a) regarding the people, so that the people would come to know about the Imam (‘a) – even if there were restrictions on the Imam's activities. The Imam (‘a) wanted the people to understand that not everyone taking control of the government and coming into power could call himself an Imam; but an Imam should always have the highest level of constant Islamic qualities such as knowledge, judgment, piety, tolerance, bravery, generosity and worshipping his Lord.[2]

Narration of hadiths related to the Household (‘a) about the oneness of Allah, rejecting all doctrinal doubts about the attributes of Allah, rejecting comparing Allah to anything, declaring falsehood to the beliefs of those who draw similarities between Almighty God and his creations (mushabbiha) by suggesting He possesses a physical form (mujassima), fatalists (mujabbira), those who adopt mankind’s absolute freedom (mufawwidha) and those whoascribe divine characteristics to the Prophet (s) or a member of his family (ghulat) were some other affairs that Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was concerned during

1. **Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni’mah**, p. 677; **al-Kafi**, 1:200; **Al-Ghaybah, al-Nu’aman**i, p. 226.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:213; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:82; **Ma’ani al-Akhbar**, p. 102.

the period of his succession to the throne.

5. Saving the Lives of the Household (‘a)

Saving the lives of the Household (‘a) and their companions and followers was another outcome of Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) succession to the throne, because to gain the Imam’s (‘a) sympathy and friendship, Al-Ma’mun forgave all the leaders of Alawides' revolt such as Zayd – the brother of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) – and Ibrahim and Muhammad, the two sons of Imam Sadiq (‘a). He even gave some of them governmental posts as governors. Peaceful reformation of the situation, strengthening the base of the companions of the Household (‘a), reorganizing and benefiting them from opportunities for bringing revolutionary change were the things which demanded a free hand, which was now available.

If Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had not accepted succession to the throne, a great number of people would have been killed before their revolutionary movements played their role among the Muslim nation. Therefore, after considering all the conditions of that time and seeing that the Household (‘a) and their followers needed an opportunity for their peaceful revolutionary movements –because in case of uprising against the government, they would face great loss– the best option for Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was to accept succession to the throne.

CHAPTER TWO
IMAM AL–RIDA'S (AS) ACTIVITIES AFTER SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE

Al-Ma'mun wanted to achieve many goals after announcing Imam Al-Rida (‘a) as his successor to the throne; but he only succeeded in halting the revolutionary movements and preventing the Imam (‘a) from being in contact with his followers in Iraq, Hijaz and the Yemen. On the other hand, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) obtained a very good opportunity which he used in the best manner to preach the method of the Household (‘a). Here we are going to give some examples of how the Imam (‘a) changed the situation in his favour:

Thwarting Al-Ma'mun's Plans

As we said previously, by making Imam Al-Rida (‘a) accept the post of successor to the throne, Al-Ma'mun wanted to use him to assist the legality of his own government. He also wanted to use Imam Al-Rida (‘a) to discontinuethe activities of promotion for good and prohibition from evil. He asked the Imam (‘a) to appoint one of his relatives as governor in one of the places where the people had revolted against his government. In doing this, Al-Ma'mun wanted to achieve one of the following two targets: by making one of the Imam's (‘a) relatives governor in the targeted place, the revolt would be suppressed by him; or he would make his companion and opposing forces fight diametrically opposite each other face to face.

However, the Imam (‘a) was well aware of Al-Ma'mun's plans. Therefore, he rejected his offer, reminding him of the conditions which he had previously mentioned before accepting the post of succession to the throne.

Here we will read about one of such offers in the words of the Imam (‘a):

Al-Ma'mun said to me: “O Abu al-Hassan, choose and appoint some

governors over some Islamic regions."

But I refused to respond to this request, saying: "Surely, I have entered into this on condition that I should not command, order, dismiss, nor counsel until Allah advances me before you (in death). By Allah, the caliphate is a thing about which I have not told myself. I was in Madinah and frequented its streets riding my own mount. The people of Madinah and others asked me to fulfil their needs and I did. So they were like uncles to me; my letters are valid in the cities. If you increase me in favour, then my Lord has bestowed it upon me."

Al-Ma'mun said: "I will act according to the conditions mentioned."[1]

Al-Ma'mun did not discuss this topic with Imam Al-Rida ('a) any further; but thought that he could remove those problems and revolutions only by creating disturbances among the people and society.

The Imam ('a) also acted according to the conditions which he had made before accepting succession to the throne. He never appointed any judge, commander or treasury trustee. He also did not do anything, including delivering a sermon, legalizing the government of Al-Ma'mun. What he did was merely to interfere in matters to the benefit of all Muslims, such as judicial problems and affairs which were related to the Muslims' policy.

Judicial Rectifications

Al-Ma'mun used to have public meetings on Mondays and Thursdays. He used to have Al-Rida ('a) sit next to him in these meetings. Once they informed Al-Ma'mun that one of the Sufi men had stolen something. He ordered that he be brought in. When Al-Ma'mun looked at him, he noticed that he was wearing worn–out clothes and the signs of extended prostrations could be seen on his forehead. Al-Ma'mun said, "It is surprising to see all these good signs and this wicked deed. Are they accusing you of stealing while you have all these beautiful signs of nobility on you?" The man said, 'I did this because I was forced to do so. I did not do it willingly, since you

1. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:144; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:177.

have deprived us of our share of the booty and the one–fifth levy which we deserve to receive." Then the Sufi continued by saying, "You have prevented me from getting my right. I am one of the wayfarers. I am one of the needy. I am one who carries the Qur'an (I am a reciter of the Qur'an who has memorized all of the Holy Qur'an)."

Then Al-Ma'mun asked the man, "Should I call off God's decrees and not execute the divine punishment for theft due to these tales?" Then the Sufi man said, "Start by purifying yourself. Then proceed to others. First, execute God's punishments on yourself, then punish others." Al-Ma'mun turned towards Abil Hassan Al-Rida ('a) and asked, "What is he saying?' Then Abil Hassan Al-Rida ('a) said, "The man says that a thief stole his property. Then he stole some of it back." Al-Ma'munbecame really angry and told the Sufi, "By God, I will chop off your hand [fingers]." Then the Sufi asked, "Will you chop off my hand while you are my slave? That is because your mother (who was a slave) was bought with money from the treasury of the Muslim nation. Therefore, you are the slave of all the people of the east and the west, until they set you free. I will not set you free. Finally, a wicked man like you would not purify a wicked one like himself. Indeed a pure one will purify him. One who is subject to receive a divine punishment himself is not allowed to execute the same form of punishment on others, until he executes it on himself first…'

Then Al-Ma'mun turned to Al-Rida ('a) and said, "What is your opinion on this issue?" Then Al-Rida ('a) said, "God the Highest has told Muhammad (s), "Say: With God is the argument that reaches home…" When this argument reaches the ignorant one who is not aware of it, he understands it and becomes knowledgeable of it. This is in just the same way that a knowledgeable person knows it due to his knowledge. This world and the hereafter are both sustained based upon this argument. This man presented his own argument." Then Al-Ma'mun ordered that the Sufi be set free."[1]

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:263-264; **Manaqib Aal Abi Talib**, 3:477; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:288-289. **'Ilal al-Shara'i**, 1:240-241.

For defending the rights of lives and properties of the oppressed and deprived and to make decisions on the basis of correct Islamic laws, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) sometimes involved himself in judicial matters.

One day a man was brought in front of Al-Ma’mun whose head was to be cut off. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was also present. Al-Ma’mun asked him: “What do you say about him?”

Imam (‘a) said: “I say: if you forgive him, Allah will increase your honour and magnification.”

Al-Ma’mun accepted what was said by the Imam (‘a) and the man was set free.[1]

One day a Christian was brought in front of Al-Ma’mun, accused of having committed adultery with a woman belonging to Bani Hashim. As soon as Al-Ma’mun saw the man, the man accepted Islam. Al-Ma’mun's heart softened by seeing this. Therefore, he asked the jurisprudents about the matter. They replied: “Islam removes all bad things done in the past.”

Al-Ma’mun asked Imam Al-Rida (‘a) about the matter. The Imam (‘a) said: “Kill him, for he became Muslim only after seeing the severe punishment. Allah the most Honourable, the most High has said: “Then, when they sighted Our punishment, they said”, We believe in Allah alone.”[2]

Administrative Rectifications

Administrative matters were among the affairs which Imam Al-Rida (‘a) did not interfere with. However, when Islam’s interest demanded it and whenever it was necessary to stop the enemies' influence in the governmental and administrative system, the Imam (‘a) interfered and gave some very useful suggestions in this regard. For example, he did not let Muslims become appointed to governmental posts in different parts of the country. One day Fadl ibn Sahl visited Al-Ma’mun and said to him: “I appointed this Turkish person to such and such a

1. **Nathir al-Dur**, 1:250; **Nuzhat al-Nadhir**, p. 127; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:100.
2. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:172; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:99.

border of the country. Al-Ma'mun kept silent and did not say anything. However, the Imam (‘a) said: "Allah has not permitted a Muslim leader, the successor of God of the worlds on earth and the administrator of religious affairs, to appoint a captive on the border of his own homeland because men are attracted by their homelands; they are kind to their own people and seek their benefits and interest even if it is not compatible with the law [and it is something irrational and dangerous.]

Al-Ma'mun said: "Write these words on gold plate."[1]

In this manner, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) gave a general rule regarding how the governors and amirs should be selected. In the above–mentioned lines the Imam (‘a) used the phrase of "a Muslim leader" by which he did not mean Al-Ma'mun but used it as a generalisation for all Muslim rulers.

Preaching Fair Thoughts in Court

The Imam (‘a) benefited from his presence in the court of Al-Ma'mun and preached correct thoughts and beliefs related to different fields of doctrine and beliefs so that the rulers, ministers, commanders, amirs, jurisprudents, servants, curtain drawers and gate keepers accepted the thoughts and beliefs of the Household (‘a) and understood their magnification and virtues. The Imam (‘a) spoke according to the conditions; also he answered the questions when the conditions were favourable. One day Fadl ibn Sahl asked Imam Al-Rida (‘a) in Al-Ma'mun's court: "O Abal Hassan (‘a), are the creatures driven [in what they do]?"

The Imam (‘a) answered: "God is for more than just to compel someone and then punish him for his deeds."

Sahl said: "Then is he free?"

Then Imam (‘a) said: "God is more knowledgeable than to let his

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1. **Al-anwar al-Bahiah fi Tawarikh al-Hujaj al-Ilahiah**, pp. 219 and 220 (taken from: **al-Dur al-Nadheem fi manaqib al-a'immah**, p. 683, chapter no. 10, Imam Rida (‘a) PART.

creature do whatever he wants."[1]

One day Al-Ma'mun told Al-Rida ('a): "O Abal Hassan Al-Rida! Tell me, why is it that your grandfather Ali – the commander of the faithful ('a) became the one to divide up paradise and hell. What is meant by this? I have thought a lot about this." Then Al-Rida ('a) told him: "O commander of the faithful (i.e. Al-Ma'mun)! Has it not been narrated by your father, on the authority of your forefathers, on the authority of Abdullah ibn Abbas, that he heard God's Prophet ('a) say, "Liking Ali is the same as faith, and despising him is the same as atheism." Al-Ma'mun said, "Yes." Then Al-Rida ('a) added, "Therefore, he is the one who divides up paradise and hell as it is loving him which equals faith, and despising him which equals atheism." Then Al-Ma'mun said, "O Abal Hassan (Al-Rida)! May God not let me live after you! I testify that you are the inheritor of the knowledge of God's Prophet (s)."[2]

In this manner, Imam Al-Rida ('a) compelled Al-Ma'mun and others to ask him questions so that he could make them aware of the Household's ('a) virtues and magnifications and let them come nearer to him. Al-Ma'mun managed different debate sessions and asked for the opponents of the Household ('a) to enter the discussion about Ali – the commander of the faithful ('a). He announced Ali's ('a) superiority over other companions of the Prophet (s). In this manner, he tried to come nearer to Imam Al-Rida ('a).[3]

Naturally, the opponents did not oppose Al-Ma'mun either because of their inner inclination to Ali ('a) or their fear of Al-Ma'mun. It was something directly affecting the audience as they saw with their own eyes how the jurisprudents kept quiet about the ideas put forward. It made no difference to the audience whether the jurisprudents kept silent because of their inner inclination or because they were afraid of Al-Ma'mun.

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1. **Nathir al-Dur**, 1:249-250; **al-Taraif**, p. 330; **Nuzhat al-Nadhir**, p. 132.
2. **Nathir al-Dur**, 1:252; **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:92; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:103.
3. **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:199; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:189.

On the other hand, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) did not miss any chance for the propagation of the Household’s (‘a) beliefs and ideas.

Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) Advice to Al-Ma’mun

When Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was alone with Al-Ma’mun, he often gave him advice and suggestions. He made him fear Allah and condemned him for his wrong deeds. Al-Ma’mun listened and seemed to accept what Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said to him; however, in his heart he did not accept the words and thought them intolerable.[1]

One day when the Imam (‘a) visited Al-Ma’mun, he found him taking wudu while his slaves were pouring water on his hands. The Imam (‘a) said to him: Do not involve someone else in your prayers for Allah.”[2]

One day Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said to Al-Ma’mun: “When two groups enter a state of war with each other, Allah helps the group which has more patience.”[3]

When the news of conquering some villages of Kabul city was given to Al-Ma’mun by one of the messengers, he visited Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and read the letter in his presence. When he had finished reading it, Imam (‘a) said to him: “Does conquering one of the towns of the pagans make you happy?” Al-Ma’mun replied: “Is there not happiness in it?” The Imam (‘a) said: “O commander of the faithful! Fear God in the way you deal with the nation of Muhammad (s) and the mission that God has given you, and has made you especial in that. You have left the Muslims’ affairs unattended to, and have turned running their affairs over to others who rule over them in ways different from God’s decrees. You have totally forgotten about these towns, have left the town of emigration (Madinah) and the site of descension of the revelations where the emigrants (Muhajerin) and their helpers (Ansar)

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1. Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:269; **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:74; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:308.
2. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 69:283 (taken from: **majma' al-bayan**, 2:269); Shaykh al-Mufid, **Kitab al-Irshad**, 2:269; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 3:74.
3. **Tarikh Ya'qubi**, p. 453; **‘Amali, al-Mufid**, p. 211; **al-Kafi**, 2:108.

were oppressed. There is no taking into consideration the believers or the divine covenants. The oppressed people there are having hard times. They cannot provide for their basic needs. They find no one to appeal to regarding their conditions and they cannot reach you. O commander of the faithful! Fear God. Attend to the affairs of the Muslims. Return to the home of prophethood and the source of the emigrants and the helpers."

Al-Ma'mun said: "O my master! What do you think now?"

The Imam ('a) said: "I think that you should leave these towns and return to the place of your father and forefathers. Take care of the affairs of the Muslims. Do not leave them to someone else. Indeed God the Highest will question you regarding your rule." Al-Ma'mun stood up and said: "Yes, my master! You are right!"[1]

For Al-Ma'mun it was the best political positioning and suggestion and he would listen to it. Therefore he returned to Baghdad.

Protecting the Entity of Islam

Although the Imams ('a) were kept away from the post of caliphate – which was their legal right – they tried to keep the entity of Islam safe from different conspiracies. To them, it was one of their main responsibilities which had to be observed. For this they tried their best and tried to solve problems presented by rulers and protected Islam from dispersion.

Among the conspiracies which had been planned to remove the oneness of Islam was the conspiracy of Fadl ibn Sahl which was first suspected by Imam Al-Rida ('a). Fadl wanted to kill Al-Ma'mun. Therefore he disobeyed his orders and cursed him. Actually he wanted to take control of the government after having Al-Ma'mun killed. He wanted to use Imam Al-Rida ('a) as a tool to silence the people. He wanted to make the Imam ('a) the ruler but keep him under his own observation. In this way, he wanted the real government to be his own. Another result which was to be gained from Al-Ma'mun's assassination was a real threat for Islam which could destroy the unity

1. **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:170-171.

of the Islamic nation and disperse the government. The Imam (‘a) had guessed that Fadl has targeted the entity of Islam, rather than the man, Al-Ma’mun. Therefore he told Al-Ma’mun to be aware of Fadl's every move. The Imam (‘a) told Al-Ma’mun to be very careful with his behaviour towards al-Fadl.[1]

One day Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said to Al-Ma’mun: “The people are not happy with you for what you did to me. Also your relatives are not pleased with you for what you did to Fadl. Therefore, it will be better to keep me away from you so that your affairs become favourable for you.”[2]

Moreover, the Imam (‘a) made Al-Ma’mun aware of the chaos, disorder and battles which had come into being after his brother al-Ameen had been killed and of the events which al-Fadl had concealed from him. The Imam (‘a) said to him: “The people are angry with you because of al-Fadl and his brother's post while the Abbasids are angry with you because of my post, for they have pledged their allegiance to me and because you have chosen me as your successor.”[3]

The advice and suggestions which Imam Al-Rida (‘a) gave to Al-Ma’mun were for saving and defending the interest of Islam because in the event of a bloody battle and internal chaos and disorder, the entity of Islam would be removed. That was why Imam Al-Rida (‘a) involved himself in such cases.

When al-Fadl was killed, his companions went in a hurry to Al-Ma’mun in order to take vengeance upon him, for they had come to know that it was he who ordered him to be killed. They shouted and said: “[Al-Ma’mun] has killed him in a cowardly fashion and now we are here to take vengeance upon him.” Al-Ma’mun said to Imam Al-Rida (‘a): “O my master, it would be better if you go and make them disperse.”

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:177-178.
2. **Nathir al-Dur**, 1:251; **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida**, 2:157; **Tathkirat al-Khawas**, 2:479-480.
3. **Tarikh Tabari**, 8:147; **Tarikh ibn Khaldon**, 3:349; **Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:346.

The Imam (‘a) went out to the revolutionaries who had come to take revenge and saw that they carried torches and wanted to burn down the gates of the palace. He shouted at them and made them understand by moving his hand. With just this movement, the people gathering dispersed in such a way that they were running and falling over each other. After a while, not one of them remained.”[1]

We see that by making the mentioned group of people disperse and stopping them from burning down Al-Ma’mun's palace, the Imam (‘a) actually chose the best option; if Al-Ma’mun had been killed in that movement, the consequences would have been intolerable for the entity of Islam. For example:

1.The companions of Fadl ibn Sahl would announce their separation from the Islamic government;

2.Hassan ibn Sahl would announce independence in the territory which was under his rule;

3.Bani Abbas would pledgeallegiance to Ibrahim ibn Mehdi, the famous singer;

4.The soldiers on the borders would be dispersed which would mean nothing but separation of the Islamic world.

Miracle, a means of reformation

A miracle is something only performed by the best and selected people of Allah – the reformists. Obviously the prophets (‘a) and their successors are the leading reformers and righteous people. These miracles are sometimes a sign, sometimes for guiding the people on the right path. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) also enjoyed this blessing of Allah. After accepting the post of succession to the throne, he used his power to guide people to the right path. Towards the beginning of the Imam’s (‘a) succession to the throne, rain was withheld from the people, so some of those who harboured malice against the Imam (‘a) ascribed that to his assuming the position of heir apparent. They began spreading that story among popular circles in order to defame the personality of the Imam (‘a). Al-Ma’mun heard of this and became

1. **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida**, 2:164.

displeased with it. He then told the Imam (‘a) about it, and asked him to supplicate Allah for sending down rain to the people. The Imam went to the desert. When he arrived in the desert, a pulpit had been installed for him. The Imam ascended the pulpit, praised Allah, and then he said: “O Allah! O Lord! It is You who have magnified our right, the Ahl al-Bayt! So they have sought access through us (to You) as You have commanded, hoped for Your bounty and mercy, expected Your kindness and favour. So give them water with rain which is useful, gentle, neither slow nor harmful! And let this rain start after they go to their houses and their abodes!”

Imam Muhammad Jawad (‘a) who was the narrator of this hadith said: ‘So by Him who sent Muhammad (s) with the truth as prophet, the wind wove clouds in the air and it thundered and lightening was produced.” When the people heard of the Imam's statement, they intended to go to their houses, lest the rain should befall them. So he said: “That cloud which has towered over you is not for you; rather it is for another city.” And he mentioned the name of the city to them. Then ten successive clouds towered over the people, and the Imam told them that each cloud would rain in a certain city, and he mentioned the names of the cities. As a result, the eleventh cloud towered over them, so he said: “O people, that is the cloud which Allah, the Great and Almighty, has sent for you, so thank Allah for His favour toward you; go to your abodes and houses, for it has been sent for you. It has been prevented from raining on your heads until you enter your abodes. Then some good suitable for the munificence of Allah, the Great and Almighty, will come to you.”

Then he descended from the pulpit, and the people hurried to their houses. When they reached home, it began raining heavily. So the valleys, the basins, the streams, and the deserts were filled with water.

The people believed in the miracles of the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt) (‘a), and said: “We congratulate the children of Allah's apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, for the miracles of Allah, the Great and Almighty, toward them.”

In the wake of the miracle, the Imam (‘a) delivered a sermon before a large crowd of people, saying: “O men, fear Allah with respect to the favours of Allah toward you, so repel them not from you through disobeying Him; rather make them continue through obeying Him and

thanking Him for His blessings and favours. And know that you do not thank Allah for anything after faith in Him, and after professing the rights of the friends of Allah from among the family of Muhammad (s), may Allah bless him and his family, more lovable to Him than helping your believing brethren with their world, which is a bridge for them to the gardens of the Lord. So surely, he who does that is among the special friends of Allah, the Blessed and Exalted."[1]

Then the Imam (‘a) mentioned the Prophet's (‘a) hadiths for them.

The Imam (‘a) also showed some other miracles which stunned the people. These miracles taught their observers about their mistakes. Here we mention another miracle of Imam Al-Rida (‘a): Whenever Imam Al-Rida (‘a) entered the court of Al-Ma'mun, the doorkeepers drew the curtains for him and let him enter. The same thing was repeated when he came out of the court. One day they decided not to serve the Imam (‘a) i.e. draw the curtains for him. However, when Imam Al-Rida (‘a) arrived they automatically and unconsciously drew the curtain for him as they had done before. By doing, this they condemned themselves and repeated their oath not to draw the curtains for Imam (‘a).

The next day, when the Imam (‘a) arrived they were very firm in their decision not to draw the curtain for him.However, while the Imam (‘a) was entering the court, a wind blew and the curtain was drawn. The same thing was repeated when he was about to leave the court. Seeing all this, they said to themselves: "This man has a great position in the court of Allah and is blessed by Him. Did you see how the wind blew on his arrival as well as when he left to draw the curtain for him? Do what you did before and serve him."[2]

When the people saw these miracles of Imam Al-Rida (‘a), they became more and more impressed by him and inclined towards him more than ever before. It was to such an extent that his respect even embraced the bandits and the misled. For example, once some bandits

1. **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida**, 2:179-180; **Dalal al-Imamah**, pp. 376-378.
2. **Al-Ithaf fi hub al-‘Ashraf**, p. 157; **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:965; **Matalib al-Suoul**, 2:129-130.

tried to get a cloak from De'bil al-Khuza'iwhich Imam Al-Rida (‘a)had given him.[1]

According to another tradition “when the bandits had looted all the properties of the caravan, they came to know that De'bil was also among the people of the caravan. Therefore, they returned everything to its owner out of the respect which they had for De'bil.”[2]

Encouragement of revolutionary poets

Poetry was one of the most useful means of spreading opinions quickly among the people in those days. It was something which very quickly became part of the people's memory. Therefore, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) encouraged the poets to write verses about the virtues and magnifications of the Household (‘a) and their leading role among the nation. He also encouraged them to write about the oppressions tolerated throughout history. The poets, having respect and love for the Household (‘a), also considered it part of their responsibility to preach their virtues) and the realities about them. De'bil Khuza'I was one of the strongest poets of his age. One day he visited Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and recited the ode of Ta'iya for Imam Al-Rida (‘a). The ode begins saying: “Schools of verses (of the Qur'an) are without recitation, and the place of inspiration is (like) courtyards without people;

To the family of Allah's Messenger belong (the houses) at al-Khif part of Mina, al-Rukn, al-Ta'rif, and al-Jamarat;

The houses belong to Ali, al-Hussain, Ja’far, Hamza, and al-Sajjad the one with calluses (Dhu al-Thafanat);

Gabriel, the trusted one, stopped at the houses carrying from Allah greetings and mercy;

The houses among which the inspiration of Allah came down to Ahmad (Muhammed), who has been mentioned in the verses, belong

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1. **Sirat A’lam al-Nubala’**, 9:391; **Dala’il al-Imamah**, p. 358; **Irshad**, al-Shaykh al-Mufid, 2:264.
2. **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:996; **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida**, 2:295-296; I**'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda,** 2:67-68.

to the people through whose guidance (men) have become rightly guided and feel secure from slipping or stumbling.

I see that their property is divided among other than them, and their hands are void of their property."[1]

De'bil continued his ode talking about the innocence of the Household (‘a) and about what they had faced from the rulers. He finished his ode with the rise of Imam Mehdi (‘a). He mentioned in his poem how the people of the earth were waiting for his appearance and how the he would fill the world with justice. When De'bil had finished reciting his poem, the Imam (‘a) stood and sent a hundred dinars to him[2]; according to another tradition, the Imam (‘a) sent him six hundred dinars[3]. De'bil refused to take them and said: "No, by Allah, I have not wanted this (money); nor have I gone out for it. I have come to have the honour of him and to look at his face. Now, if he wants to do me a favour, ask him to give me one of his garments as it will be better for me."

Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) scientific activities

As we have said before, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was under observation of the caliph; however, he did not stop playing his role in the fields of education and science. In fact, he preached the sciences of the Household (‘a) in the best possible manner. The ministers, jurisprudents, judges, commanders, the members of the court and the common people enjoyed the flowing spring of knowledge when meeting Imam Al-Rida (‘a). In addition to what Imam (‘a) said, Al-Ma'mun and his companions also wanted the Imam (‘a) to answer their questions. Responding to Al-Ma'mun's request, Imam (‘a) wrote a dissertation on Islam and religious decrees. Also to respond to the

1. **Divan of De'bil Khuza'I**, p. 124.
2. **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:995; **'Uyun akhbar al-Rida**, 2:294; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:67.
3. **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:66-67 (taken from: **Irshad**, Shaykh al-Mufid, 2:263 and 264); **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:263; **Kamal al-Din**, pp. 373 to 376; **Dala'il al-Imamah**, p. 385; **Sirat A'lam al-Nubala'**, 9:391.

questions of the common people, he defined some other religious matters such as: prayers, fasting, Hajj, zakat, khums, the promotion of good and deliverance from evil and sin. He also wrote a dissertation on medicine and sent it to Al-Ma'mun which he wrote on gold plates.

Among the Imam's (‘a) scientific gatherings were the gatherings for the Qur'an. The Imam (‘a) not only interpreted the holy Qur'an in these gatherings, but he also narrated the prayers of his father and forefathers (‘a) for his students; he mentioned the pure history and conducts of the prophets (‘a) and other people. Imam (‘a) asked them to walk on the right path which is that of the Prophet (s) and Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a). Also he asked them to follow the conduct of the Household (‘a).[1]

Although the Imam (‘a) was under observation and could not practise his political activities in public, he benefitted from every single chance – though dangerous – and tried to keep the religion from every kind of deviation and change and preached the knowledge of his father and forefathers (‘a). The Imam (‘a) used all his energy directly and indirectly for this purpose. He mentioned the reality of the revolutionary and divine front line of the Household (‘a). He also distinguished between this front line and that of the caliphs who were riding on the necks of the nation. He stressed continuation of the front line of the Household (‘a) till the day of resurrection. It was, therefore, necessary for him to look to the future with the perception of a leader who was fully aware of the way to guide the Islamic nation to prosperity and perfection.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and the Future

The Imam's (‘a) role was not limited to his own era but was for every age and time. He had the responsibility of proving Islamic ideas and beliefs and making them everlasting. Also, he was to keep them from being distorted. Therefore, the Imam (‘a) practised the following:

1.Presenting good thoughts and beliefs, defining religious matters and negating contradictory rules.

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:129 and 95; **Tuhaf al-‘Uqul**, p. 416.

2.Reforming the current situation on the basis of the Islamic method.

3.Allowing the Islamic nation to enjoy the element of sincerity which turned out to be very useful in the propagation of beliefs, rules and reformation of the situation in the society.

4.Determining the next Imam (‘a) on the basis of the explicit sayings of the Prophet (s) narrated by the Imams (‘a).

5.Making the people consider the time towards the end of the world when Imam Mehdi (‘a) would appear and lead them. Moreover, telling people about the qualities of Imam Mehdi (‘a) such as: his birth, nourishment, occultation and his varied and distinguished role in the field of revolution.

Till now we have discovered what was said in the first, second and third points. For determining the Imam after him whose presence could guarantee the continuation of the mission of Imamah, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) introduced his son Imam Jawad (‘a) to be his successor with the help of different explicit texts under different conditions.

Imamah of Imam Al-Jawad (‘a) in the Sayings of Imam Al-Rida (‘a)

Before and after the birth of his son, Imam Jawad (‘a), Imam Al-Rida (‘a) always mentioned the Imamah of his son in his sayings. Here we will mention some of Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) sayings about Imam Jawad’s (‘a) Imamah:

1.Safwan ibn Yahya narrated: “Once, I said to Al-Rida (‘a): we often asked you, before Allah granted Abu Ja’far to you, about the Imam after you and you would say “Allah will give me a boy.” Now, Allah has given you a boy and has delighted our eyes. If something happens (to you), to whom shall we refer? He pointed to Abu Ja’far(al-Jawad) who was before him and who was, at that time, three years old. I said: “He is a three–year–old child!” He said: “It does not matter. Jesus Christ (‘a) was entrusted with prophethood while he was less than three years old.”[1]

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1. **Usul al-Kafi**, 1:321; **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2 p. 1035.

This discussion took place in 198 A.H., i.e. three years after Imam Jawad's (‘a) birth; he was born in 195 A.H. Another important point in this discussion is that Imam Al-Rida (‘a) talked about the Imamah of Imam Jawad (‘a) even before his birth. On every occasion, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) talked about the Imamah of his son and asked the people to observe his position.

2.When Imam Jawad (‘a) was born, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said: This is a baby more blessed and lucky than any other of our Shi'is has ever been."[1]

We can see in these lines how Imam Al-Rida (‘a) praised his son on the very first day of his birth and how he showed the high position of his newly born son to the people.

3.Mu‘ammar ibn Khallad narrated:"I heard (abu al-Hassan) Al-Rida who said something (leadership with Divine Authority) and then said, "I do not think you need what I just said. This is Abu Ja'far (‘a). I have placed him in my own place to assume my position. We are of the family of Ahl al-Bayt whose younger ones inherit everything exactly from their elders measure to measure."[2]

4.Although Imam Al-Rida (‘a) lived far away from Madinah, he was in contact with his son Imam Jawad (‘a) through letters. The letters which he wrote to his son were filled with respect in which he magnified his son. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) always mentioned his son under his Kunya. He said: "Abu Ja'far wrote to me and I wrote to Abu Ja'far." The letters of Abu Ja'far Jawad (‘a) which were received by Imam Al-Rida (‘a) were filled with beautiful writing.

Abu al-Hassan ibn Ibad, who was the narrator of this saying, continues: "I heard Imam Al-Rida (‘a) saying: "Abu Ja'far is my administrator and he is my successor among my family after me."[3]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) expressed different sayings and guidance's to his

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1. **Kafi**, 1:321; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:95; **Irshad**, al-Shaykh al-Mufid, 2:279.
2. **Al-Kafi**, 1:320; **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 2:1036; **Irshad**, al-Shaykh al-Mufid, 2:276.
3. **Al-Sirat al-Mustaqeem**, 2:166; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 50:18.

followers. By this, he wanted them to understand that he was trying to guide them towards the Imam after him and that he was about to leave the world. With this intention, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) wrote to his son: “I have heard that when you ride, the retainers make you go out of the small door of the garden; this is a sign of miserliness in them lest anyone should attain good from you. So I ask you by my right that you should go out and come in through the large door, and if you ride, Allah willing, let gold and silver be with you. When someone asks you for something, give it. When one of your uncles asks you to give to him, then do not give him less than fifty dinars; as for more than this amount that is up to you. When one of your aunts asks you to give to her, then do not give her less than fifty dinars; as for more than this amount that is up to you. And when one of Quraysh asks you (to give to him), then do not give him less than twenty–five dinars; as for more than this amount, that is up to you. Surely I want Allah to give you success, so fear Allah. Give and do not fear miserliness from the possessor of the throne.”[1]

There are a great number of traditions and explicit texts about the Imamah of Imam Jawad (‘a). Their meanings are the same, however they are different in wording. There are some reasons behind this such as:

A.The unbalanced political and social conditions which embraced Imam Al-Rida (‘a), his son Imam Jawad (‘a) and their companions.

B.The difference in understanding, power and secrecy of the companions of Imam Al-Rida (‘a); also the level of their mental, spiritual and political relationship with the Imam (‘a) had a great effect on the sayings of Imam (‘a).

5.Ja’far ibn Muhammad Nawfali narrated: “I went to Imam Al-Rida (‘a), offered greetings and took a seat. I said to him: may I die for you, there are some people saying that your father (‘a) is still alive.”

The Imam (‘a) said: “They are telling a lie. Allah's curse be upon them.”

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:233; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:95.

I said: "What do you say about me?"

The Imam (‘a) replied: "After me consult my son Muhammad (Jawad) because I amleaving on a journey of no return (i.e. the journey to Khurasan.)[1]

6.Bazantee said: "Al-Najashi once asked me, "Who will be the Imam after your master? I wish you to ask him so I will know." I then went to see Ali Al-Rida (‘a) and informed him (of al-Najashi's wish)."

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said: "The Imam will be my son."[2]

7.Once a group of people were in the presence of Imam Al-Rida (‘a); when they prepared to leave the meeting the Imam (‘a) said to them, "Meet Abu Ja'far (‘a), (before you leave), offer greetings to him and renew your covenant with him." When they left, he (the Imam) (‘a) said to me, "May Allah grant well–being to al-Mufaddal, he would have believed (in the succeeding Imam) without it (the command to renew their covenant)".[3]

Allama Majlisi interprets a phrase of Imam (‘a) "he would have believed without it" in that "he would have believed without too much explanation as I have given to you about the Imamah and succession after me." The Imam (‘a) made them consider that the reason behind his saying so was to announce the Imamah of his son ImamJawad (‘a). He did not directly mention his Imamah on the basis of Taqiyyah "dissimulation".[4]

When among his relatives, sincere companions, reliable representatives and the revolutionary organizations which he had prepared for the future, the Imam (‘a) would express the Imamah of his son clearly. The Imam (‘a) prepared some scouts, such as his uncle Ali ibn Ja'far (‘a), Safwan ibn Yahya and Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Nasr to back the policies and programmes of the Household (‘a) and the introduction of the Imam (‘a) after Imam Al-Rida (‘a).

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1. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 48:260 and 49:285.
2. **Al-Kafi**, 1:320; **Irshad**, al-Shaykh al-Mufid, 2:277.
3. **Al-Kafi**, 1:320; **Irshad**, al-Shaykh al-Mufid, 2:280; **al-Ghaybah**, al-Tusi, pp. 70-71.
4. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 50:25.

The explicit text about Imam Jawad (‘a) which Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and his forefathers (‘a) expressed was accepted by the followers of the Household (‘a) – except in some cases. The Imamah of Imam Jawad (‘a) did not remain a secret from the Abbasid government, the commanders and governors.

Making Ground for Imam Mahdi‘s (‘a) Worldwide Government

Another belief which is accepted by all the Muslims is the issue of the Imamah of al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance). The Muslims believe him to be the great saviour of humanity. They believe he will come and make the earth abound with peace and justice which is now filled with injustice and oppression. Since there was not long between the period of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and that of Imam Mahdi (‘a), Imam Al-Rida (‘a) fulfilled his duty and provided the people with thoughts and beliefs in this regard. Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) predictions and traditions were linked to the Prophet’s (s) hadiths. Here we will mention some of the hadiths and traditions of the Prophet (s) about the birth and occultation of Imam al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance):

The Prophet (s) said: “Even when the entire periodof the world’s existence is exhausted and one solitary day is left to embrace the eve of doomsday, God will expand and make that very day expandto such a length of time as to accommodate the ultimate reign of a person out of my holy progeny who will be called after my name. He will then make the earth abound with peace and justice.”[1]

Also he said: “Al-Mahdi is from among my family and he is one of the children of Fatimah (‘a).”[2]

There is another tradition in which the Prophet (s) said: “Al-Mahdi is from the progeny of Hussain (‘a).”[3]

Many clear hadiths have been narrated from the holy Prophet (s) about

1. **Sunan Abu Da'wood**, 2:310; **al-Mosanaf ibn abi Shibah**, 8:679.
2. **Sunanibn Majah**, 2:1368; **Sunan Ibn Maja**, 2:1368; **'Iqd al-Durar**, p. 42; **al-Ghibah**, Tusi, p. 186.
3. **'Iqd al-Durar**, p. 157:46; **kitab al-Fitan**, Nu‘aym ibn Hammad, p. 263.

the occultation of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) such as:

“I swear by Him who sent me with good news of truth, one of my descendants “Qa'im” will occult on the basis of the agreement which is between me and him [and his occultation will be so long] that most of the people will say: “Why does Allah need the Household of the Prophet (‘a)? And a group of people will become doubtful about his birth. He who understands him will save his religion. Let him not be doubtful or let satan occupy his life.”[1]

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) mentioned this Islamic rule [the occultation of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance)] among his relatives and reliable companions on the basis of his responsibility. There are thirty–six traditions in “musnad Imam Al-Rida (‘a)” narrated by the Imam (‘a) on the issue of “occultation”. [2]Here we will mention only a few of them:

1.Ayub ibn Nooh narrated: “We hope that you will become the one for this task (Leadership with Divine Authority). Allah will drive it to your control with the sword now that the pledge of allegiance is offered to you and currency coins are printed in your name.” The Imam (‘a) said, “There has been no one of us with whom letters had been exchanged, pointed out with the gesture of a finger, questions asked and properties delivered but that he was murdered or died in his bed. (It will be as such) until Allah raises for this task (Leadership with Divine Authority) a young boy from among us whose birth place and upbringing would be unknown (to people), but not to his ancestors.”[3]

2.Muhammad ibn Abi Ya'qub al-Balkhi narrated: “I heard Abu al-Hassan Imam Reza (‘a) say: “The people will be tested through something that is severe and great. They will be tested with a foetus in the abdomen of his mother and the infant, until it is said that he has disappeared and that he is dead. They will say: There is no Imam.”[4]

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1. **Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni’amah**, 1:51.
2. **Musnad Imam Al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:216-228.
3. **Al-Kafi**, 1:341-342; **Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni’amah**, 2:370
4. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 51:155; **Ghibah**, al-Nu’amani, p. 185.

3.Imam Al-Rida (‘a), indicating one of Imam Mahdi’s (‘a) qualities, called him the third of his sons. He said: “As if I see the Shi'ahis when they lose the third of my sons, they will be searching for green pasture, but will not find it.” Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Fazzal said to the Imam (‘a): “Why thus, O son of the Messenger of Allah (‘a)?” He said: “Because their Imam will disappear from them.” I said: “Why?” He said: “So there will not be any pledge of allegiance for anyone over his shoulders when he rises with the sword.”[1]

4.Then Imam Al-Rida (‘a) moved further and mentioned the name of the twelfth Imam (may Allah hasten his appearance). He said: “Definitely, there will occur dumb, catastrophic mischief, in which every secret and close relation will be dropped. That will happen when the Shiiites will miss the third of my sons. The dwellers of the heavens and the earth, and every worthy and merited man, and every contrite and sorrowful person will cry for him.” Then he said [addressing Imam Mahdi (may Allahhasten his appearance]: “My father and mother are the ransom of the namesake of my grandfather and my look–alike and the look–alike of Musa– the son of Imran (‘a).”[2]

The Abbasid rulers looked at the issue of Imam Mahdi (‘a) [the Divine Proof of Allah] as “an Islamic reality which certainly was about to occur”. They feared that their government would end in his hands. Therefore, the traditions about Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance) were narrated in secret. Perhaps the reason behind calling the Imams (‘a) to the capitals of their caliphates was that the Abbasid rulers were hoping that if they could not stop the Imam Mahdi’s birth (may Allah hasten his appearance), they should be informed about his birth and kill him in the cradle.

That is why they called Imam Al-Rida (‘a) to Khurasan. After him, when the capital was changed, Imam Jawad (‘a) was called to Baghdad. Two possible reasons can be mentioned for which Al-Ma’mun married his daughter Umm Fadl to Imam Jawad (‘a): he

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1. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 51:152; **'Ilal al-Shara'i**, 1:245; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:247.
2. **Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni’amah**, 2:370-271; **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, p. 251; **Ghibah**, al-Tusi, p. 439.

wanted to keep the possible birth of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance) under his observation and create blood relations between Abbasids and the Imams (‘a) and the second possibility was to create a fracturein the personal lives of the Imams (‘a) so as to be aware of new events in their lives.

This method continued even after Imam Al-Rida (‘a) as the caliphs called Imam Jawad (‘a), Imam Hadi (‘a) and Imam Hassan Askari (‘a) to the capitals of their government.[1]

Certainly the reason for killing and martyring the Imams (‘a) was also to stop Imam Mahdi’sbirth (may Allah hasten his appearance). We see that Imam Jawad (‘a) was poisoned at the age of 25; Imam Hadi (‘a) was martyred when he was forty–two years of age and Imam Hassan Askari was assassinated when twenty–eight years old.[2]

The explicit text of Abu Muhammad Imam Hassan Askari (‘a) helps us to understand it in a more coherant manner. He said:

Bani Ummayid and Bani Abbas raised their swords against us for two reasons: firstly the news that they have no right to the caliphate. They were therefore afraid that we would ask for our right and wrest it out of their hands.

On the basis of the transmitted traditions, they had come to know that the rule of the tyrants would come to an end in the hands of “Qa'im” and they did not have any doubt that they were among the oppressors and cruel men. Therefore, they tried their best to kill the family of the Prophet (s) and remove their purified progeny in order to prevent his birth; or, in the event of his being born, to kill him. But Allah did not want the secret of [his birth] to be known even by a single one of them

1. What is very interesting is that unlike their forefathers, the Imams (‘a) after Imam Rida (‘a) had fewer sons which shows how intensely they were being scrutinised by the rulers. The reason for this was their fear that Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance) was to be from the progeny of the Imams (‘a).
2. Refer to: **Muntakhab al-Athar**, section no. 2, chapter no. 34 (taken from: Khatoon Abadi, Arba'een).

as He will complete His light, even if the infidels do not like it.[1]

The presence of the Imams (‘a) in the courts of the Abbasid caliphs made it very easy for them to keep the Imams' (‘a) activities under observation. That is why Imam Hassan Askari (‘a) did not marry in a typical manner. When Imam Mahdi (‘a) was born, Imam Hassan Askari (‘a) did not let anyone know about it. It was because of the dominating conditions; the continuous search of the government for Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance) and it was possible that his Imamah would be understood and they would have him killed. The caliphs' search for Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance) was because the Shi'ahis were waiting for him to come – and because the caliphs knew that he was the son of Imam Hassan Askari (‘a). Also it was because of the traditions [related to Mahdawiyah] which were known and repeated by the Shi'ahis.[2]

The behaviour of the government as well as the intelligence and secrecy of the Household (‘a) were the reasons that before being caught, Imam Mahdi (‘a) hid himself from the eyes of the rulers. However, this secrecy does not mean that the Imams (‘a) especially Imam Al-Rida (‘a) were negligent in this regard; but rather all of the Imams (‘a) along with Imam Al-Rida (‘a) talked about believing in Mahdi’s (‘a) birth. They also mentioned his name. In short, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) mentioned his successors and the Imams after him, namely Imam Jawad (‘a), Imam Hadi (‘a), Imam Hassan Askari (‘a) and finally Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance). In this manner he let the divine and revolutionary mission continue so that the Islamic Ummah remained stable in their love for the Household (‘a) and continued their intellectual, emotional, spiritual and behavioural relations with them.

The Sad End of Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) Life

We might have seen a pious person foretelling his death on the basis of a dream or intangible revelation; such a person even tells us the

1. Ithbat al-Hudah, **al-Hurr al-'Amili**, 3:570; **Ithbat al-Raj'ah**, Fadhil ibn Shathan.
2. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 50:334; **Irshad**, Shaykh al-Mufid, 2:336).

day, month and year of his death. Now, if a common person can do it, then certainly Imam Al-Rida (‘a) or any other Imam (‘a) would know this. Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had a high spiritual position; he was not negligent in his actions and moves; he was always in connection with his Allah and he purified his deeds for Him. On the basis of divine revelation, the traditions which he had heard from his father, forefathers and the Prophet (peace be upon them all), he knew exactly the time and place of his martyrdom and on some occasions he pointed to it.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) made a group of people aware about his grave. One day he stuck two of his fingers together and said: “My grave under that of Harun is like this.”[1]

When Harun was delivering a sermon on the pulpit of the Prophet’s (s) mosque, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was also present. He said: “you will see that I and he will be buried at one place.”[2]

One day, Harun departed from one of the gates of the Masjid ul–Haram (the house of God) and Imam Al-Rida (‘a) left from another gate. The Imam (‘a) said: “How far away is the (eternal) abode and how close is the meeting. Toos has brought me and him together.”[3]

Ibn Hajar said: “He – Imam Al-Rida (‘a) – said that he would die before Al-Ma’mun and would be buried beside Harun. In the end, it happened as he said.”[4]

When Al-Ma’mun was calling Imam Al-Rida (‘a) to Khurasan , the Imam (‘a) asked his family members to gather. He has said: “When they wanted to take me out of Madinah, I asked all my family

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1. **Kafi**, 1:491; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:245; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:60 (taken from: **Irshad**, Shaykh al-Mufid, 2:258); **Al-Ithaf fi hub al-Ashraf**, p. 314.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:247; **Al-Irbali, Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:96; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:59; **Al-Ithaf fi hub al-Ashraf**, p. 316.
3. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:216; Al-Irbali, **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:105 (taken from: **Ailma al-wara**, 2:59); **Al-Ithaf fi hub al-Ashraf**, p. 316.
4. **Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah**, 2:593.

members to gather around me and cry so that I would hear it. Then I divided their inheritance share of twelve–thousand dinars and told them: I will never return to my family again."[1]

After the Imam's ('a) succession to the throne, De'bil Khuza'i recited his ode of "Ta'iya" for him. When he reached this verse:

"And a grave is in Baghdad; (it) belongs to a pure soul which the Merciful (Allah) has included in the gardens", Imam Al-Rida asked him: "Shall I add two lines (to your ode) in this place?"

"Yes, O son of Allah's messenger ('a)", replied De'bil.

So he said:

"And a grave is at Toos. What a misfortune is that which has pressed the bowels through sights.

"To the mustering (or) until Allah sends al-Qa'im who will remove grief and distress from us."

So De'bil asked him: "Whose grave is at Toos?"

Imam replied: "It is mine. Very soon, however, Toos will become the place where my visitors and followers will travel to go on pilgrimage to my shrine."[2]

As we said before, the Imam ('a) had foretold that he would not pass the age of succession to the throne; and it happened just as he had predicted. He was poisoned to martyrdom [by Al-Ma'mun as it will be told] before Al-Ma'mun.

Imam Al-Rida's ('a) Martyrdom

The traditionists discussing Imam Al-Rida's ('a) death have talked about different reasons. According to some, the Imam ('a) died a natural death; while others are of the belief that he was killed by being poisoning. However, the second belief is more reliable as it belongs to

1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2, p. 235; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:59-60.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:295; **Manaqib Al-Abi Talib**, 3:450; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2, p. 67.

the majority of traditionists and historians. Here we will mention some of the traditions which say that the Imam (‘a) was poisoned:

1.Salah al-Din Safadi said: “The end of his [Imam Al-Rida (‘a)] story with Al-Ma’mun was that Al-Ma’mun poisoned him with the help of poisonous pomegranate… in that way he tried to please Bani Abbas.”[1]

2.Yaqoobi said in this regard: “It is said that Ali ibn Hisham gave him poisonous pomegranate.”[2]

3.Ibn Habban mentioned in his book: “Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) died in Toos after drinking a drink which Al-Ma’mun had forced on him.”[3]

4.Among other traditionists who have mentioned how Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was killed is Shahab al-Din Naweeri. After having mentioned some points in this regard, he said: “And it has been said: Al-Ma’mun poisoned him by poisonous grapes. However, some people think this is impossible, therefore, they have rejected it.”[4]

5.Another tradition has been narrated from Qalqashandi regarding this matter. He said: “It is said that he was poisoned by poisonous pomegranate.”[5]

6.The people of Toos considered Al-Ma’mun to be the Imam’s (‘a) murderer. On the other hand, Al-Ma’mun himself also confessed that the people thought such things about him. That is why he went to meet Imam Al-Rida (‘a) moments before his martyrdom and said to him: “O my Master! I do not know which of the two tragedies is more intolerable for me: losing and remaining alone after you? Or the accusation of the people who will consider me as your murderer?”[6]

7.Only one day after Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) martyrdom, the people gathered and said: “This man [Al-Ma’mun] has killed him.”[7]

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1. **Al-wafi bil wafiyat**, 22:156.
2. **Tarikh al-Ya’qubi**, 2:453.
3. **Al-Thuqat**, 8:456- 457.
4. **Nihayat al-Irab**, 22:210.
5. **Maathar al-inafa fi Ma'alim al-khilafa**, 1:211.
6. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:269; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:299.
7. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:270; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:299.

There are many proofs pointing to the fact that Al-Ma'mun killed the Imam ('a) with poison. One of these proofs is Al-Ma'mun's plan to get rid of Imam ('a). Al-Ma'mun wrote to Bani Abbas: "… [I know that] I must not be negligent about him; but I must degrade him slowly and gradually in the eyes of the people so that they will believe that he is not fit for the post of Imamah. And then we will make some plans for getting rid of him and the problems which we are facing on his account."[1]

When we research, we see that Imam Al-Rida ('a) was martyred after Al-Ma'mun's decision to go to Baghdad and move the capital of his caliphate there. This is the best proof of Al-Ma'mun's involvement in Imam Al-Rida's ('a) martyrdom, because if Imam Al-Rida ('a) remained in his post of successor to the throne, the Abbasids would keep resisting Al-Ma'mun. Al-Ma'mun wrote a letter to the Abbasids in which he tried to please them. He wrote: "You have been angry with me because I have chosen Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida ('a) for the post of successor to the throne. Now that he has died, listen to my orders."[2]

After seeing all these, Imam Al-Rida's ('a) being killed by Al-Ma'mun does not seem unnatural but rather very natural because he was the person who, to come to power, killed his own brother and thousands of Muslims working in his and his brother's army. He did it acting upon his father's saying: "Ruling is sterile [and knows no kinship]."

The Causative Factors that led Al-Ma'mun to decide to poison the Imam

Al-Ma'mun intended to achieve his goals by giving the Imam the post of succession to the throne. However, after he had chosen Imam Al-Rida ('a) as his successor, not only did he not get what he was planning for but he also faced some disorder, created by the Abbasid, for dragging him down from his post.

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1. **Faraid al-Samtain**, 2:214 and 215; **Dala'l al-Imamah**, p. 380; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:128.
2. **Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah**, 10:272; **Tarikh al-Tabari**, 7:150; **Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:351.

Ahmad ibn Ali Ansari, narrating from Abu Salt Harawi, mentioned Al-Ma'mun's motivation by giving the post of succession to the crown to Imam Al-Rida ('a). He said: The reason that he set Al-Rida ('a) up as the successor to the throne after himself was that he wanted the people to think that Al-Rida ('a) was inclined to worldly affairs, and then Al-Rida ('a) would lose his place in the people's hearts. However, what he had plotted did not happen. And the nobility of the Imam ('a) increased amongst the people and his position was strengthened in their heart; then Al-Ma'mun invited speakers from various countries hoping that they might be able to overcome Al-Rida ('a) in their debate resulting in his deficiencies becoming apparent to the people. However none of them – whether Jews, Christians, sages, Sabians, Brahmans, unbelievers, adherers to the doctrine of the eternity of the world, and opponents from the various Muslim sects, were able to defeat Al-Rida's ('a) arguments. And they were all convinced by his arguments and proofs. Then the people said, 'By God! Al-Rida ('a) is more deserving than Al-Ma'mun to be caliph.' His spies reported this news to Al-Ma'mun. He became really angry and his jealousy increased. However, Al-Rida ('a) did not fear Al-Ma'mun and clearly expressing the truth. Al-Rida ('a) often replied to Al-Ma'mun in such a way that Al-Ma'mun did not like. Then Al-Ma'mun would become angry and hold a grudge against Al-Rida ('a), but he never made it known. Once all his plots against Al-Rida ('a) failed, he killed him with poison."[1]

As we have already mentioned, Imam Al-Rida ('a) continuously asked Al-Ma'mun to excuse him from the post of successor to the throne because he knew that a group of people would be angry with Al-Ma'mun's action [and as a result they would plan to remove the Imam ('a) by any means.]

Ibrahim Sawli says in this regard: "By God it was the affair [of the post of succession to the throne] which resulted [for Imam Al-Rida ('a)] in that way [that Al-Ma'mun practised the plot of his martyrdom]."[2]

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:226; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:290.
2. **Nathir al-Dur**, 1:251; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:157.

As the Imam (‘a) said, some of Al-Ma’mun's ministers and commanders had hatred in their hearts against him (‘a) and were jealous of him. However, as if that wasn’t enough for them they started backbiting and spreading slander about him. Finally their ominous attempts turned out to be fruitful and Al-Ma’mun poisoned Imam Al-Rida (‘a).”[1]

After Al-Rida (‘a) had eaten a few spoonfuls, the mark of death appeared on his face. After Al-Ma’mun had left, the physical condition of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) deteriorated. The following were the final words which he uttered: “…Say: Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death…” and “And the command of God is a decree determined.” When the following morning came, Al-Ma’mun woke up early and ordered that Al-Rida (‘a) be washed and shrouded. He himself followed the corpse with a bare head and said, ‘O brother! Indeed there is a gap in Islam due to your demise. And God’s destiny (for you) overcame my efforts on your behalf.’ Then Al-Ma’mun had the grave of Harun Al-Rashid (Al-Ma’mun's father) dug and buried Al-Rida (‘a) there.”[2]

De'bil ibn Ali Khuza'i recited some verses mourning Imam Al-Rida (‘a) including the following:

“I see the Umayyads excused if they were to kill,

But I see no reason why the Abbasids should at will;

Sons of Harb, Marwan and Banu Ma'eet, their breed,

Grudge and hate is for them the only creed.

People whom you fought in the early days,

Of Islam to bring them over to His ways.

When they took charge and then did rule,

They reverted to Kufr (unbelief) and left the Usool.

Head towards Toos to the grave site

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1. For details of how Imam Rida (‘a) was martyred, please refer to: **al-'Awalim**, pp. 488 to 498.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:267-268; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:305.

Of the pure one, of the faith that is right,
If you ever wish to remember Islam like me,
Pristine, Islam of Muhammad and Ali.
Two graves in Toos: one for the best of all,
And the worst man people will ever recall.
No good will reach the villain (Harun ar–Rashid) who is lying nigh,
In grave to one whose virtues reach the sky (Imam Al-Rida),
Nor will the pure suffer any harm,
When near the soul that will never calm."[1]

According to most of the traditionists and historians, Imam Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) was martyred on the last day of Safar in 203 A.H.[2]

The Prominence of Visiting Imam Al-Rida (‘a)

Ibn Habban mentioned in his book: "I have gone on his [Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida's (‘a)] pilgrimage so many times. When I was living in Toos, whenever hardship overcame me, I went on a pilgrimage to Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) holy shrine and asked Allah for a solution to my problems. My prayers were accepted and all my hardships were removed. I have tried this so many times and each time the result is the same."[3]

The dignity of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was observed and can never be denied by anyone. Some of the doctors with patients who were, they believed, incurable, also believed in greatness of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) when they saw how the patients got better in Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) hospital with the blessing of Allah and Imam Al-Rida (‘a). Today part of Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) holy shrine has been dedicated to the sick whose doctors have rejected them saying that they are incurable.

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:251.
2. **Tarikh al-Tabari**, 7:150; **Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh**, 6:351; **Tarikh ibn Khaldon**, 3:250; **I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda**, 2:41.
3. **Al-Thuqat**, 8:457.

CHAPTER THREE
THE SCHOOL, DIALOGUES AND THE INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE OF IMAM AL–RIDA (AS)

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) lived at a time when Islamic society as well as the Islamic nation had opened its door to other cultures and civilizations. The newly introduced culture started playing its role in the development of Islamic culture and civilization; it was just the same as the way every new culture tries to influence the one to which it is being introduced. The time of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was no exception. The introduction of new civilizations was so swift that it had really become a great danger for Islam and the Islamic civilization. At such a time, if those people who held the responsibility of defending the Islamic culture did not step in to save it from losing its identity and becoming something innovative, then certainly no signs of Islamic culture would remain.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) who was the leading one in this regard, did not show the slightest negligence towards this important issue. He trained a great number of Islamic scholars so that they could also play their part in keeping the Islamic heritage from being melted into another shape. Also, the Imam (‘a) wanted them to preach the correct Islamic beliefs all over the world; and indeed they had the responsibility of training new generations and making them able to continue this divine mission during their own periods of time.

In this manner, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) created a living university which enjoyed the intellectual elements and revolutionary culture and which was a part of Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) living heritage. The long discussions Imam Al-Rida (‘a) had with the people of other religions were also among his distinctions.

The traditions, letters and the books about different branches of Islamic sciences compiled by Imam Al-Rida (‘a) are another part of the Imam’s (‘a) everlasting heritage that has been left behind for Islamic Ummah and society.

Here we will discuss all the above–mentioned topics in the form of three discourses:

1. Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) School

According to historical accounts, the number of students at Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) school was from 313 to 365 people, all gaining knowledge in this institute. The author of "Musnad Imam Al-Rida (‘a)" collected these people on the basis of their narrations and thus said their number was 312 students. Shaikh Toosi mentioned the number of Imam Al-Rida's (‘a) companions to be 315. However, Baqir Sharif Qarashi mentioned this number to be 367 people.[1]

A glimpse of "Musnad Imam Al-Rida (‘a)" will tell us about the inclinations of the university of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and the qualities in the fields of educational and ethical nourishment, preparing long–term future groundwork which was based on the infallible Imams (‘a). Certainly this theory was not the result of a belief or thought but when we come to find its basis in the explicit sayings, we find its originality. In fact, these explicit sayings had blessed the followers of the Household (‘a) with bright ways; the pious followers who had accepted the intellectual and political guideline of the Household (‘a) and who were prepared for every kind of devotion for preaching the pure beliefs and principles based on the truth.

This was the time when the Shi'ah and the followers of the Household (‘a) increased the level and speed of their educational activities. They worked in the fields of compilation, edition, teaching and narration of Hadiths and other current educational ground. On the other hand, the number of students, who were followers of the Household (‘a) and who were studying in the schools of traditionist jurisprudents, was also remarkable. When glancing at the list of traditionists, with consideration of their nationalities, inclinations, the level of their understanding and the questions and topics through which they narrated hadiths from Imam Al-Rida (‘a), we come to know about their multi–dimensional efforts towards knowledge and enjoyment of

1. Refer to **Musnad Imam Rida (‘a)** and **the life of Imam Ali ibn Mussa al-Rida (‘a)** (study and analysis), 2:511-555.

the pure knowledge of imam Al-Rida (‘a).

Here we introduce some of Imam Al-Rida’s (‘a) companions and their works:

A. Younus Bin Abd al-Rahman

The translators found the following books to be written by Younus ibn Abd al-Rahman[1]:

1.Kitab al-Sharay';
2.Jawami' al-Athar;
3. Al-Jami' al-Kabir fi al-Fiqh;
4. Al-Salat;
5. Al-Wudu’;
6.Yawm wa laylah;
7. Al-Sahw;
8. Al-Zakat;
9.Ikhtilaf al-hajj;
10. Al-Ilal al-kabeer;
11.Ilal al-Hadith;
12. Al-Fara'id;
13. Al-Fara'id al-Saghir;
14. Al-Ihtijaj fi al-Talaq;
15. Al-Tijarat;

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1. He was the retainer of Aal Yaqtin and was among the leading Shi'ah and one of their eminent men. He was reliable and was one of the companions of Imam Kadhim (‘a) and Imam Rida (‘a). Ibn Nadeem said of him: "Younus ibn Abd al-Rahman was one of companions of Mussa ibn Ja’far (‘a); a retainer of Aal Yaqtin and a learned person of his age who wrote many books on the Shiite sect. " Then Ibn Nadeem counted the names of his books.
Younus was among "the companions of Ijma'". He was born in the time of Hisham ibn Abd al-Malik. He saw Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) between al-Safa and al-Marwa, but he narrated nothing on his authority. He narrated on the authority of Imam al-Kadhim and Imam al-Rida (‘a). Imam Rida (‘a) ordered his Shi'ah to take their religious answers from Abd al-Rahman. He was among those who spent a great amount of money as Waqf. He died in 208 A. H. May Allah have mercy on him.

16. Al-Muzara'aat;
17. Al-Adab wa al-Dalalat alal khayr;
18.'Ilal al-Nikah wa Tahleel al-Mut'ah;
19. Al-Buyu'a;
20. Al-Diyat;
21. Al-Hudood.

B. Safwan ibn Yahya

The translators attributed the following books to Safwan ibn Yahya[1]:

1.Kitab al-Wudu (the Book of Ablution).
2.Kitab al-Salat (the Book of Prayer).
3.Kitab al-Sawm (the Book of Fasting).

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1. Abu Muhammad Safwan ibn Yahya Bujayli Kufi known as "Baya' al-Sabiri" was a companion of Imam Kadhim (‘a), Imam Rida (‘a) and Imam Jawad (‘a); and these great Imams (‘a) had confirmed his jurisprudence and knowledge. He was a reliable man from "the companions of Ijma'" and administrator of Imam Rida (‘a). He wrote many books. He was so pious and worshipful that none of his class was like him. (**Bihar al-Anwar**, 75:337).
Shaykh Tusi said of Safwan: according to the narrators of Hadiths, Safwan was the most reliable and pious person of his age. He prayed one hundred and fifty rak'as every day, fasted three months a year, and paid the poor-rate three times. The reason for this was the covenant which he had made with his two friends which is as follows:
He was the bosom friend of Abd Allah ibn Jundab and Ali ibn al-Nu'man. It is reported that they made a covenant in the Sacred House of Allah that when any of them died the rest should pray, fast, and pay the poor-rate [zakat] on behalf of him. They died and Safwan remained living, hence prayed one hundred and fifty rak'as every day, fasted three months a year, and paid the poor-rate three times. He also perfomed other good deeds on their behalf.
He narrated from forty companions of Imam Sadiq (‘a). He wrote many books and was like "Hussain ibn Sa'id" in this regard. He also had a book containing the issues and traditions of Imam Kadhim (‘a). He died in Madina and Imam Jawad (‘a) sent his embalmment and shroud. The Imam (‘a) told Isma'il ibn Mussa to offer prayers on his dead body. May Allah have mercy on him. (Tabarsi, **al-Ihtijaj**, 2:184; Allama Hilli, **khulasat al-Aqwaal**, p. 17).

4.Kitab al-Hajj (the Book of Pilgrimage).
5.Kitab al-Zakat (the Book of Alms).
6.Kitab al-Nikah (the Book of Marriage).
7.Kitab al-Talaq (the Book of Divorce).
8.Kitab al- Fara'id (the Book of the Inheritance).
9.Kitab al-Wasaya (the Book of Wills).
10.Kitab al-Shira' wa al-Bay' (the Book of Buying and Selling).
11.Kitab al-'Itq wa al-Tadbir (the Book of Emancipation of Slaves and Direction.
12.Kitab al-Bisharah(the Book of Good News).
13.Kitab al-Nawadir (the Book of Miscellaneous Traditions)

C. Hassan ibn Mahbub

Hassan ibn Mahbub was also one of those who had been trained in the school of the Household ('a). He was very active in the field of compilation and editing. The following are some of his books:

1.Kitab al-MaShaykh (the Book of the Shaykhs);
2.Kitab al-Hudood (the Book of Islamic Punishments);
3.Kitab al-Diyat (the Book of Blood Money);
4.Kitab al- Fara'id (the Book of Religious Obligations);
5.Kitab al-Nikah (the Book of Marriage);
6.Kitab al-Talaq (the Book of Divorce);
7.Kitab al-Nawadir (the Book of Miscellaneous Traditions), about one thousand pages;
8.Kitab al-Tafsir (the Book of Interpretation (of the Qur'an);
9.Kitab al-'Itqq (the Book of Emancipation of Slaves)

Some other books have also been mentioned whose authors are said to be Uthman ibn Isa Ru'asi, Muhammad ibn Abi Umayr, Ali ibn Yaqteen and Muhammad ibn Isa Yaqteeni respectively. Ibn Sharashob wrote of Muhammad ibn Isa Yaqteeni: "He has compiled eighteen thousand, and according to another traditional fifteen thousand, questions which were asked of Aba al-Hassan [Ali ibn Musa ('a)], and their answers."[1]

1. Refer to Abdul Hadi Fadli, Tarikh al-Tashri' al-Islami, p. 180

2. Imam Al-Rida's ('a) Dialogues

Opening the gates of Islamic culture to other nations and cultures – despite their causes and effects[1]–demanded that those with divine revolutionary leadership should step forward to stop the Islamic culture from decline and collapse. In fact it was among their responsibilities to do so. For this, they had to equip the Islamic Ummah and Islamic society with educational and cultural preservation so that they would resist a pre–planned or accidential attack from other cultures.

As we have already mentioned, the debates were one of the things which made Imam Al-Rida ('a)'s era different from others. At that time, the Islamic Ummah was in great danger from the point of view of culture and civilization. Al-Ma'mun held gatherings for debates between Imam Al-Rida ('a) and the followers of other religions and the people of the newly introduced ideas without any hesitation. Al-Ma'mun's intention was revealed and a number of discussions were held on different topics related to all fields of knowledge. As the only known educational personality of the Islamic world, Imam Al-Rida ('a) entered debate sessions with the followers of almost every religion and caste and proved them to be wrong and weak against his

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1. There are some reasons behind this:
a. Migration of the people of other nations to the Islamic lands because of the coexistence which they had with the Muslims;
b. Despite Islamic conquers and victories, the followers of the other nations were trying to achieve cultural influence in Islamic culture and civilization;
c. The caliphs were playing a noticeable role in encouraging the translators of foreign heritage with the intention of educational enhancement and the understanding of other cultures;
d. The caliphs tried to stop those looking for education and knowledge from quenching their thirst at the pure spring of the Household ('a) and their knowledge and wisdom. They wanted the people to be involved in other cultures and wisdoms. They knew that in case of benefiting from the knowledge and wisdom of the Household ('a) the people's inclination towards education – and later on towards politics – was certain, which was something never acceptable to the caliphs.

powerful reasoning. The Imam (‘a) proved his educational superiority in every discussion. In this manner, he earned great and everlasting honour for the Islamic world and the Muslim nation. As a result, the Imam (‘a) became a very famous personality all over the world.[1]

It is not obvious whether the discussions which took place between Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and the followers of other religions were mentioned in historical books. However, those which are available today tell us that Al-Ma’mun did not succeed in stopping the discussions taking place between Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and the followers of other religions; although he tried intensely to stop these discussions from spreading. Certainly these were pure deep scientific discussions which took place at different periods of time. The books of Ihtijaj – Shaykh Tusi; Bihar al-Anwar – Allama Majlisi; and Uyun akhbar Al-Rida (‘a)–ShaykhSaduq mention a number of these discussions.

Here we will mention the most useful outcomes of these discussions:

1.Competing with the followers of other religions and castes and proving the superiority of the revolutionary school of thought of the Household (‘a);

2.Providing a background for spreading the culture of the House-hold (‘a) in Islamic society;

3.Guiding the Muslims to the revolutionary path of the Household (‘a) and calling them for gathering at a single platform for intellectual and doctrinal connection with the Household (‘a);

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1. Imam's (‘a) superiority and educational personality in the Islamic World may be one of the reasons why Al-Ma’mun hurried to kill him, because Al-Ma’mun could never achieve such a high position and he would be known after Imam (‘a) – as he was. That is the reason why he planned to kill the Imam (‘a); because according to the people, he was a good opponent for Al-Ma’mun and was far more superior. Al-Ma’mun could not tolerate this superiority. On the other hand, the post of cilaphate was something which could not be neglected because "government is sterile and does not recognize any relation. " In this Al-Ma’mun defamed himself by shedding the purified blood of Imam Rida (‘a).

4.Backing the Islamic government which had supported humanity with all its educational resources which were under the control of Islamic culture and civilization;

We must not forget that these outputs and great victories were the most effective element for the martyrdom of the Imam (‘a). As previously stated, the achievement and victories of the Imam (‘a) had negative effects on the caliph. As a result the presence of the Imam (‘a) became unbearable for Al-Ma’mun who was dreaming of ruling over the entire Islamic world.

However, whether Al-Ma’mun liked it or not, Imam Al-Rida (‘a) mentioned his ideas on the topics such as the unity of God, prophecy and the prophets (‘a), Islamic sects, caliphate, the companions of the Prophet (s) and other controversial issues, and defeated his opponents.

To understand the educational and scientific superiority of Imam Al-Rida (‘a), we are going to mention some of his debates in detail:

1. Discussion with the Dualist Polytheists

ShaykhSaduq narrated from Fadl ibn Shathan: “I was in the presence of Imam Al-Rida (‘a) when a dualist said to Imam Al-Rida (‘a): I say there are two creators of the world. What is your proof for the oneness of the creator of the world?”

The Imam (‘a) replied: “The reason for which you believe there are two creators is because you accept the oneness of the first creator and then move towards a second one. Therefore, what is acceptable by both of us is the oneness of God and what is not agreeable by us is the duality of Him.”[1]

2. Discussion with People of Different Religions

Hassan ibn Muhammad Nawfali said: “When Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) [arrived in Khurasan and] met Al-Ma’mun, Al-Ma’mun took other measures to examine the Imam (‘a), that he might be successful through defeating him (in one session). He ordered his minister al-Fadl ibn Sahl to summon prominent theologians from among the

1. Shaykh Saduq, **al-Tawhid**, p. 270; **Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah**, 1:135.

rhetoricians and the religions such as the Catholic archbishop, the chief Rabbi, the Hindu high priest, followers of Zoroaster, [1]Nestus the Roman medical scientist, and the rest of the theologians. Al-Fadl gathered them in Al-Ma'mun's palace, and then he made them come in to him. Al-Ma'mun received them with hospitality and honour. Then he presented before them what he intended, saying: "I have gathered you for (something) good and wanted you to debate with my Madinahn cousin, who will come to me. Come to me tomorrow morning. None of you should be absent."

"We listen and obey you", they answered him.

Al-Ma'mun ordered Yasir, the retainer, to summon the Imam to debate with the scholars of the religions. Yasir hurried to the Imam and informed him of Al-Ma'mun's statement. As for the Imam ('a), he responded and, turning to al-Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Nawfali said to him: "Nawfali, you are an Iraqi, and the heart of an Iraqi is not hard; so what can you gain from causing your cousin to require us to meet with polytheists and rhetoricians?"

Al-Nawfali understood Al-Ma'mun's intention, so he said to the Imam: "May I be your ransom, he wants to put you to test, and he wishes to know how much knowledge you have. He has, indeed, built his assumption on a shaky foundation, and evil, by Allah, is what he has built."

"And what has he built?" asked the Imam.

Al-Nawfali explained to the Imam what he was wary of and feared for him from them, saying: "The theologians and the heretics are the opponents of the scholars. That is because a scholar does not deny the undeniable, whereas rhetoricians, theologians, and polytheists are people who deny and try to prove what is not true. If you argue with them and tell them that Allah is One, they would say: 'Prove His oneness, ' and if you say that Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family, is the Messenger of Allah, they would say: 'Confirm his message, ' then they would press their lies on a person while he tries to disprove their lies, and they would continue to prove that he is mistaken till he abandons his argument; so, beware of them, may I be your ransom. "Al-Nawfali expressed his fears of those with whom the Imam ('a) would debate, for they would not intend reaching reality

and knowing the truth; they would depend on fallacies in order to achieve their cheap objectives. The Imam (‘a) removed al-Nawfali's fears, saying:”Nawfali, do you fear that they will disprove my argument?”

“No, by Allah”, replied al-Nawfali, “I have never worried about you, and I hope that Allah will enable you to have victory over them, Allah willing!”

“Would you like to know when Al-Ma’mun will feel remorseful?” asked the Imam (‘a).

“Yes,” al-Nawfali replied.

The Imam (‘a) explained: “When he (Al-Ma’mun) hears me argue with the people of the Torah quoting their own Torah, with the people of the Gospel quoting their own Gospel, with the people of the Psalms quoting their own Psalms, with the Zoroastrians arguing in their Persian language, with the Romans in their own Latin, and with the rhetoricians using their very rhetoric. So, if I close the avenues of argument in the face of each arguing party and disprove his claim, making him renounce his statement from the onset and referring to my own statement, then Al-Ma’mun will realize that he will not achieve what he aspires. It is then that he will feel regretful. And there is no strength save in Allah, the Most High, the Almighty.”

Through these words the Imam (‘a) announced that he had boundless scientific ability and that he was able to argue with people of all religions and beliefs, to refute their imaginations, and to show them the way to the truth. He decided to make Al-Ma’mun feel remorseful over those measures he took against him.

On the following day, al-Fadl ibn Sahl hastened to the Imam (‘a) and said to him: “May I be your ransom, your cousin (i.e. Al-Ma’mun) is waiting for you. The people have gathered. What is your view of going to him?”

The Imam (‘a) answered him that he was ready to attend (the session) and that he was going to Al-Ma’mun. He went out (walking) with solemnity toward which faces were humble. He remembered Allah and came in to Al-Ma’mun. The session was attended by the Talibian, the Hashimites, the military commanders, and Muslim and non–

Muslim scholars. When the Imam (‘a) arrived, Al-Ma’mun and all those who were in the session stood up for him, and received him with honour and magnification. The Imam (‘a) sat while the people were still standing in order to show respect for him. Al-Ma’mun ordered them to sit and they sat down. All the people in the session kept silent as a sign of respect for the Imam (‘a), and then Al-Ma’mun turned to the Catholic archbishop and said to him: “O Catholic one, this is my cousin Ali ibn Musa ibn Ja’far. He is one of the children of Fatimah, daughter of our Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, and of Ali ibn AbiTalib, peace be on him. I would like you to debate with him on theology, argue with him, and show justice toward him.

“Commander of the faithful (‘a), how can I argue with a man who argues with me through a book which we have denied and a prophet whom I do not believe?” asked the Catholic.

The Catholic thought that the Imam (‘a) would produce evidence in support of his belief through some verses of the Holy Qur'an or through some words of the Messenger (s). As he had no faith in the Qur'a`nic verses and the Prophetic traditions, he asked the Imam (‘a) to give proof of his beliefs from their own books, and the Imam (‘a) answered him saying: “O Christian one, if I give proof from your gospel, will you admit it?”

“Yes,” retorted the Catholic, “By Allah, I will admit it. Can l repel what the Bible says?”

“Question (me) whatever you desire and hear (my) answers”, declared the Imam (‘a).

Q1: “What is your view of the prophethood of 'Isa` (Jesus Christ) and his book? Do you deny anything of them?”

Ans. 1: “I admit the prophethood of 'Isa` (Jesus Christ) and his book, and that he brought good news to his community, and the disciples admitted it. He who does not admit the prophethood of Muhammad (s) and his book and does not bring good news of them to his community denies the prophethood of 'Isa.”

“Aren't precepts proved through two just witnesses?” asked the Catholic.

“Yes,” replied the Imam (‘a).

"Therefore, name two witnesses from other than the people of your religion and from among those whom Christians do not deny, that they might (confirm) the prophethood of Muhammed. And ask us for the like of that from among other than the people of our religion," demanded the Catholic.

The Imam ('a) believed his statement, for he brought justice, saying: "Now, you have brought justice. Do you not accept from me the just one who was given preference (over the others) by al-Masih ibn Maryam (Jesus, son of Mary)?"

"Who is the just one? Name him for me," asked the Catholic.

"What is your view of Yohanna al-Daylami?" asked the Imam ('a).

"Bravo! Bravo!" respondedthe Catholic, "You have mentioned the most lovable of the people to al-Masih."

Imam Al-Rida, ('a) the Prophet's (s) grandson, asked him: "I challenge you to swear (by Allah), does the Bible says that Yohanna says: Verily al-Masihhas told me of the religion of Muhammad (s), the Arab, given me good news of him, he will be (a prophet) after him, so I (Yohanna al-Daylami) gave good news of him to the disciples and they believed him."

The Catholic was unable to deny the Imam's ('a) statement, but he said: "Yohanna did not name him for us, that we may recognize him."

The Imam ('a) asked him: "If we bring you someone who recites the Bible and recites to you Muhammed's name, his Household, and his community, then will you believe him?"

"A sound suggestion", the Catholic answered.

The Imam ('a) turned to Nestus, the Roman, and asked him: "Have you memorized the third book of the Bible?"

"I have thoroughly memorized it," was the answer. The Imam ('a) addressed the Catholic, saying: "Don't you recite the Bible?"

"Yes," he said.

The Imam ('a) said: "Therefore, (I will) recite to you (some verses from) the third book. If Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family, his Household, and his community have been mentioned in it,

then bear witness to me. If they have not been mentioned therein, then do not bear witness to me."

The Imam ('a) recited to him some verses from the third book. When he reached the reference to the Prophet (s), he turned to the Catholic and asked him: "I challenge you to swear by al-Masih and his mother, did you know that I had knowledge of the Bible?"

"Yes", came the answer.

The Imam ('a) recited to him some verses from the third book concerning the reference to the Prophet (s), his Household ('a), and his community. Then he asked him: "What is your view? This is the statement of 'Isa ibn Maryam. If you deny what the Bible says, then you will deny Musa and 'Isa. If you deny them, then it is obligatory (on people) to kill you, for you have denied your Lord, your prophet, and your book."

The Catholic said: "I do not deny the clear things in the Bible; rather I admit them."

The Imam ('a) turned to those who were present and asked them to remind the Catholic of his own words, and then he said to the Catholic: "Catholic, question me whatever you desire.

"**Q2**: "Tell me about the disciples of 'Isa ibn Maryam: How many were they? (Tell me) about the scholars of the Bible: How many were they?" the Catholic asked.

Ans. 2: "You have found the expert! As for the disciples, they were twelve men. The best and the most learned of them was loqa`. As for (the number of) the scholars of the Christians, it was three men: Yohanna, the greatest–Yaha, Yohanna (Baqriqisiya), and Yohanna al-Daylami (Bazikha`r), who made the reference to the Prophet (s), and his Household ('a); it is he who gave good news of him (s) to the community of'Isa and the children of Isra'il."

The Imam ('a) added: "By Allah, we believe in 'Isa who believed in Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family. We have nothing against 'Isa except his weakness and the paucity of his fasting and prayer."

When the Catholic heard the last words of the Imam's ('a) statement,

he shouted: “By Allah, you have corrupted your knowledge! Your affair has become weak! I thought that you were the most learned of the Muslims!”

The Imam (‘a) faced him calmly, asking: “Why?”

The Catholic became enraged, so he said: “Because of your statement (which is) that 'Isa was weak with little fasting and praying – (while) 'Isa never broke fasting by day and never slept by night. He always fasted by day and prayed by night.”

The Imam (‘a) prepared to disprove the Christian belief which said that al-Masihwas a god other than Allah and was served! He asked the Catholic:”

For whom did he (al-Masih) fast and pray?”

The Catholic did not answer, not knowing what to say. So the Imam (‘a) turned to him, saying: “I want to ask you a question.”

“Ask”, said the Catholic, “I will answer you if I have knowledge of it.”

“Did you not deny that 'Isa gave life to the dead with Allah's permission?” asked the Imam (‘a).

“I spoke of that before”, the Catholic answered. “He who gives life to the dead, heals the blind and the leprous is a lord worthy of being served.”

The Imam (‘a) disproved his statement, saying: “Indeed al-Yas'a did just as 'Isa (‘a), did: he walked on water, gave life to the dead, healed the blind and the leprous. Why did his community not adopt him as a lord? Why did not anyone serve him (as a god) other than Allah? He gave life to thirty–five men sixty years after their death. Catholic, you find in the Torah that these (men) were among the youths of the children of Isra'il whom Bukht Nasr (Nebuchadnezzar) chose from among the children of Isra'il when he invaded Jerusalem, that he took them and headed for Babylon, and that Allah, the Great and Almighty, dispatched al-Yas'a for them and he gave life to them. This (statement) is in the Torah. None denies it except an unbeliever.”

The Catholic admired the Imam's (‘a) knowledge of their books, and then he said: “We have heard of it and recognized it.”

The Imam (‘a) turned to a Jew who was in the session and asked him to recite some verses of the Torah and he recited them, and there was in them a reference to some prophets. Then the Imam turned to the Catholic and asked him: “Were these (prophets) before 'Isa (‘a) or was he before them?”

“Rather they were before him”, was the answer.

The Imam (‘a) began reciting to them some miracles of his grandfather, the greatest Prophet (s), the last of the prophets, saying: “Quraysh gathered around Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, and asked him to give life to their dead. He sent with them Ali ibn Abi–Taliband said to him: 'Go to the cemetery and call out at the top of your voice to the people about whom they have asked: So–and–so, so–and–so, Muhammad (s), Allah's Apostle, says to you: Rise with the permission of Allah, the Great and Almighty! They rose and dusted off their heads. Quraysh walked toward them and asked them about their affairs, and then they told them that Muhammad (s) was appointed as a prophet. They (the people who rose from the dead) said: 'We would that we knew him and believed in him!' He (the Prophet -s-) healed the blind, the leprous, and the mad. The beasts, the birds, the jinn, and Satan spoke to him, but we did not adopt him as a lord other than Allah. We do not deny the favour of any of these (prophets). If you have adopted 'Isa as a lord, then it is permissible for you to adopt al-Yas'a and Hizqal as two lords, for they did just as 'Isa ibn Maryam did, such as giving life to the dead. Then a group of the children of Isra'il left their own homeland in thousands due to fear of death from plague. Allah made them die within one hour. The people of the village fenced them, and they remained therein until their bones became decayed. One of the prophets of the children of Isra'il passed by them; he was amazed when he saw their many decayed bones. Allah revealed to him: 'Would you like (Me) to bring them to life and you warn them?'

“Yes”, was the reply.

“Allah revealed to him that he should call them out, and he said: 'Decayed bones, rise with Allah's permission.' All of them rose and dusted off their heads. Then Ibrahim, Allah's bosom friend, took the birds, cut them into pieces, and put each piece on a mountain. He called them out and they came toward him walking. Then Musa ibn

‘Imran and his seventy chosen companions; they went with him to the mountain and said to him: 'You have seen Allah, then make us see Him.'

“'I have not seen Him”, he said to them.

“They said: ‘We will not believe in you until we see Allah manifestly.’ The thunderbolt overtook them, and all of them burnt. Only Musa remained (alive).”

“He (Musa) said: 'My Lord! I chose seventy men from among the children of Isra'il and brought them (to the mountain). Shall I return by myself? How shall my people believe what I will tell them? If only You willed and perished them along with me before! Shall you let us perish due to what the foolish did?

“So Allah, the Great and Almighty, gave life to them after their death. You cannot deny all these things which I have mentioned to you, for the Torah, the Bible, the Zaboor (the Psalms of David) the Furqan (Qur'an) have mentioned them. If all those who gave life to the dead, healed the blind, the leprous, and the mad were adopted as lords other than Allah, then you adopt them as lords. What is your view, Christian?”

The Imam (‘a) criticized the Christians for their adopting al-Sayid al-Masih has a lord other than Allah, on account of him giving life to the dead, that he healed the blind and the leprous, while such miracles happened through the master of the prophets, the Messenger (s), and through some great prophets, yet they were not adopted and served as lords other than Allah, the Most High.

After the Catholic archbishop had heard these brilliant words of the Imam (‘a), he addressed him, saying: “My view agrees with yours, and there is no god but Allah.”

The Imam (‘a) turned to the chief Rabbi and said to him: “Turn to me; I want to ask you about the ten verses which were sent down to Musa ibn ‘Imran. Have you found written in the Torah the news of Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family, and his community, (which says): When the last community and the followers of the rider of the camel (who) glorify the Lord very, very (much), (with) a new glorification in the new churches (he meant the mosques), then let the

children of Isra'il flee toward them and their dominion, that their hearts may be tranquil, for there will be in their hands swords with which they will take vengeance on the unbelieving communities in the regions of the earth. In this manner it has been written in the Torah?"

The Rabbi was amazed and began saying: "Yes, we have found that (written) in this manner."

The Imam (‘a) turned to the Catholic and asked him: "What about your knowledge of the Book of Sha'y'a?"

"I know it letter for letter", was the answer.

The Imam (‘a) addressed the Catholic and the Rabbi and said to them: "Do you know that this (statement) is of his speech: O people, I have seen the picture of the rider of the donkey. He was wearing gowns of light. And I have seen that the light of the rider of the camel is like that of the moon."

They began saying: "Sha'y'a did say that!"

The Imam (‘a) turned to the Catholic and asked him: "Did you know that 'Isa said: 'I am going to my Lord and your Lord, and the paraclete is coming who shall testify to my truth just as I testified for him, and he shall explain everything to you, and he shall be the one to expose all the sins of the nations, and he shall be the one to smash the pillar of unbelief.'?"

The Catholic was amazed and said: "We admit all what you have just quoted of the Bible."

Then the Imam (‘a) made him confess that through the Bible, saying: "Have you found that established in the Bible?"

"Yes", came the answer.

"O Catholic, could you tell me about the first Bible, how you lost then found it, and who put your existing Bible together?" asked the Imam (‘a).

The Catholic said at random: "We did not lose the Bible except for one single day and then we found it once more; Yohanna (John) and Matti (Matthew) brought it back to us."

The Imam (‘a) answered him, saying: "How little your knowledge of

the Bible and its scholars is! If such is your claim, then why do you dispute with each other about the Bible? Rather, controversy has always revolved around the Bible which is in your hands today. Had it been the same as the first one, you would not have this dispute (with one another) about it, but I shall inform you of such controversy myself: Be informed that when the first Bible was lost, the Christians gathered around their scholars and said to them: "Isa` ibn Maryam (Jesus son of Mary) has been killed, and we do not know where the Bible is. You are the scholars, so what do you have with you?'

"Aluqa (Luke), Marqanus (Mark), and Yohanna (John) said to them: 'We have learnt the Bible by heart; so, do not grieve in its regard, and do not forsake the churches, for we shall recite to you one gospel after another on each Sunday till we put it all together.'"

The Imam ('a) added: "Aluqa (Luke), Marqanus (Mark), Yohanna (John), and Matti (Matthew) put this Bible of yours together after you had lost the first (original) one. These four men were students of the early (disciples); are you aware of that?"

The Catholic admired the Imam ('a) and confessed to him that he had no knowledge of that, saying: "This I did not know and now I have learned from you things with which I was familiar and which my heart testifies to be the truth. I have, therefore, gained a better understanding."

The Imam ('a) turned to Al-Ma'mun and those who were present from among his family and others. He said to them: "Bear witness to what he has just said."

"We testify", they said.

The Imam ('a) addressed the Catholic, saying: "I challenge you to swear by the son and his mother whether you know if Matti (Matthew) said concerning the lineage of 'Isa : 'The Messiah is Dawud (David) son of Ibrahim (Abraham) son of Ishaq (Isaac) son of Y'aqub (Jacob) son of Yahud (Yehuda) son of Khadrun, and that Marqanus (Mark) said of the lineage of 'Isa` that he was the word of Allah which he placed in a human body, so it became human, and that Aluqa (Luke) said that 'Isa ibn Maryam (Jesus son of Mary) and his mother were of flesh and blood, so the Holy Spirit entered into them.' Then you testify that 'Isa himself said the following about his creation: 'I will tell you

the truth: None ascends the heavens except he who descends thence except the rider of the camel, the seal of the prophets, for he shall ascend to the heavens then shall he descend.' What do you say about that?"

The Catholic admitted what they said about the Messiah and what the Messiah said concerning his creation.

He said: "This is the speech of 'Isa, and we do not deny it."

The Imam (‘a) said to him: "If so, what do you say about the testimony of Aluqa (Luke), Marqanus (Mark), and Matti (Matthew) with regard to 'Isa and what they had attributed to him?"

"They lied about him", was the answer. The Imam (‘a) turned to the leaders and the scholars who were present in his session and said to them: "People, has he not (a moment ago) testified to their truthfulness and said that they were the scholars of the Bible and what they said is the truth?"

Defeat appeared on the Catholic's face, and he asked the Imam (‘a) not to question him, saying: "Scholar of the Muslims, I would like you to excuse me from discussing these men."The Imam (‘a) excused him, and then he said to him: "Question me on whatever you desire."

The Catholic admired the Imam's (‘a) knowledge, which was a natural extension to that of his grandfather (‘a), the master of all creatures, Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family. Then he said to the Imam (‘a) with submission and admiration: "Let someone other than me ask you. By Allah, I did not think that there was a scholar like you among the Muslims."

The Imam (‘a) asked him: "Shall you question me or shall I question you?"

"Rather I shall question you", replied the Rabbi, "and I shall not accept any proof from you except from the Torah, the Bible, Dawud's Zaboor (the Psalms of David), and the scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa."

The Imam (‘a) agreed to this condition, saying: "Do not accept any proof from me except what the Torah says by the tongue of Musa, the Bible by the tongue of 'Isa ibn Maryam, and the Zaboor by the tongue

of Dawud, peace be on them."

Q1: "How can you prove the prophethood of Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family?"

Ans. 1: "He bore witness to the prophethood of Musa ibn 'Imran, 'Isa ibn Maryam, and Dawud, the vicegerent of Allah on earth."

The Rabbi asked the Imam ('a) to prove that, saying: "Provide evidence from the words of Musa ibn 'Imran."

The Imam ('a) said: "Did you, Jew, know that Musa said to the children of Isra'il: 'A prophet will come to you concerning him. Believe in him and hear from him?' Did you know that the prophet Isra'il had brothers other than the sons of Isma'il? Did you know the kinship between Isra'il and Isma'il and the lineage between them through Ibrahim?"

The Rabbi admitted that, saying: "This is the speech of Musa, and we do not deny it."

"Did one of the brothers of the children of Isra'il other than Muhammad come to you?"

"No", was the answer.

"Is this not correct in your view?"

"Yes", replied the Rabbi, "but I want you to make it correct according to the Torah."

The Imam ('a) recited to him a verse from the Torah, saying: "Do you deny that the Torah says to you: 'The light came from Mount Sina, shone for the people from Mount Sa'ir, and became public for us from Mount Faran."

The Rabbi admitted these words (of the Imam -as-), but he asked him to explain them to him, and he, peace be on him, said: "I will tell you about them. As for his statement: 'The light came from Mount Sina, it is the revelation of Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, which He sent down to Musa on Mount Sina. As for his statement: 'Shone for the people from Mount Sa'ir, ' it is the mountain where Allah, the Great and Almighty, gave revelation to 'Isa ibn Maryam. As for his statement: Became public for us from Mount Faran, it is one of the mountains of Makkah, between which and us is a day or two–day

journey.

“Sha'ya, the Prophet, said in the Torah concerning what you and your companions say: 'I have seen two riders to whom (He) illuminated earth. One of them was on (the back of) a donkey and the other was on (the back of) a camel.' Who is the rider of the donkey, and who is the rider of the camel?”

The Rabbi did not know that although it was in the Torah, so he asked the Imam (‘a) to explain it to him, and he, peace be on him, said: “As for the rider of the donkey, he is 'Isa`; and as for the rider of the camel, he is Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family. Do you deny that this (statement) is not in the Torah?”

“No, I do not deny it”, came the answer.

“Did you know Habqu`q, the Prophet?” asked the Imam (‘a).

“Yes, I know him”, was the answer. The Imam (‘a) recited to him what was narrated on his authority, saying: “He said, and your Book says it: 'Allah, the Most High, brought the Baya`n from Mount Faraan; the earth was full of the glorification of Ahmad and his community. He will carry his horses in the sea just as he will carry (them) on the land. He will bring us a new Book (i.e. the Qur'an) after the destruction of Jerusalem. Did you know this (statement) and believe in it?”

The Rabbi admitted it. Then the Imam (‘a) turned to him and gave to him another proof of the good news which had been mentioned in the Zaboor about the greatest messenger, Muhammad (s), saying: “Dawud said in his Zabur, and you read it: 'O Allah, send him who will establish the Sunna (practice) after the cessation (of the prophets).' Did you know that a prophet other than Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family, established the Sunna after the cessation (of the prophets)?”

The chief Rabbi dodged and denied the truth, saying: “This is the speech of Dawud. We know it and do not deny it. However, he meant 'Isa by that, and the cessation was before him!”

The Imam (‘a) asked him: “Did you not know that 'Isa endorsed the Sunna (practices) of the Torah until Allah lifted him up to Himself. And in the Bible it is written that Ibn al-Ba`rra (the son of the pious

woman, i.e. 'Isa) will go, and the paraclete will come after him. It is he who will preserve the bonds, explain everything to you, and testify to my truth just as I testified for him. I have brought you the examples, and he will bring you the interpretations. Do you believe that this (statement) is in the Bible?"

"Yes", replied the Rabbi, "I do not deny it."

"I want to question you about your prophet Musa (Moses)", demanded the Imam (‘a).

"Question", was the answer.

"What is the evidence for the prophethood of Musa?" asked the Imam (‘a).

The Rabbi began producing evidence in support of the prophethood of Musa, saying: "He brought what the prophets before him had not brought."

"Could you give me an example of what he brought?" asked the Imam (‘a).

The Rabbi replied: "He split the sea, turned the cane into a snake running, cleaved the stones so that springs gushed forth from them, took out his hand shining white for the onlookers, and other signs the like of which creatures are unable to bring."

The Imam (‘a) confirmed his statement, saying: "You are right; they are proof of his prophethood. He brought the like of which the creatures were unable to bring. Is it obligatory for you to believe he who claims prophethood and performs something which all creatures are unable to perform?"

The Jew denied the Imam's (‘a) statement, saying: "No, because there is none like Musa, because of his position with his Lord and his nearness to Him. It is not incumbent on us to profess the prophethood of he who claims it unless he brings us knowledge similar to that brought by Musa."

The Imam (‘a) disproved the Jew's statement, saying: "Then how come you admit the prophethood of the other prophets who preceded Musa who did not split the sea; nor did they cleave stone so that twelve springs would gush forth from them; nor did they take their

hands out shining white as Musa did; nor did they turn the rod into a running snake?"

The Jew replied: "I told you that if they performed signs as evidence for their prophethood which all other creation was unable to perform, if they brought something the like of which Musa had brought or they followed what Musa had brought, then it is incumbent on us to believe them."

The Imam ('a) disproved his argument, saying: "Chief Rabbi, what has prevented you from professing (the prophethood of) 'Isa ibn Maryam who brought the dead to life, healed the blind and the leprous, determined out of dust the form of a bird, then breathed into it and it became a bird with Allah's permission?"

The Jew dodged and said: "It is said that he did that, but we did not see it."

The Imam ('a) answered him with a conclusive argument, saying: "Did you see the signs which Musa performed? Weren't Musa's trustworthy companions the ones who gave an account of that?"

"Yes", came the answer.

The Imam ('a) forced him (to admit that) through a decisive argument, and then he said: "In this manner the successive accounts about what 'Isa` ibn Maryam had done also came to you. So why do you believe in Musa and do not believe in 'Isa`?"

The Rabbi remained silent, and feebleness appeared on his face, for the Imam ('a) had closed all avenues of argument before him and established decisive proof against him. The Imam ('a) added: "Such is the matter of Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family, what he brought, and every prophet whom Allah sent. Among his (Muhammed's) signs are: He was a poor orphan and shepherd. He did not learn nor study under a teacher. Then he brought the Qur'an in which are the stories of the prophets, peace be on them, and their accounts letter for letter, and which reports on the bygone (communities) and those who will remain until the day of resurrection. Then it gives accounts of their secrets and what they did in their houses; therein are many verses (in this connection)."

The Rabbi interrupted the Imam's ('a) speech, saying: "Neither the

account of 'Isa nor the one of Muhammad is correct to us, and it is not permissible to admit (their prophethood) through what is not correct (with us)."

The Imam (‘a) confuted the Jew’s speech, saying: “Is the witness who testified 'Isa` and Muhammad false?"

The Rabbi kept silent and looked for a vague error in order to back his groundless viewpoints.

The heads of the creeds failed to render the Imam (‘a) incapable, and feebleness appeared on their faces. There was none except the Zoroastrian high priest, so the Imam turned to him and asked him:

“Tell me about Zoroaster, whom you claim is a prophet; what is your evidence for his Prophethood?"

The Hindu high priest said: “We did not see him, but the tales of our ancestors informed us that he had legalized for us what no other person before had made legal."

The Imam (‘a) asked him: “You believed in the tales which came to you about him so you followed him, didn't you?"

“Yes", he answered.

The Imam (‘a) established an undeniable argument, saying: “This is the case with all other nations. Tales had come to them about what the prophets had accomplished, what Musa, 'Isa`, and Muhammed, may Allah bless him and his family, had all brought them so why did you not believe in any of these prophets, having believed in Zoroaster through the tales that came to you about him informing that he brought forth what others did not?"

Perplexity and astonishment filled the Zoroastrian high priest; he was stunned and had nothing to say. Accordingly, the prophet's grandson (i.e. Al-Rida-as-) turned to the chief representatives of those creeds and said to them: “People, if there is among you someone who opposes Islam and wants to question (me), let him put forth any question (to me) without any shame! [1]"

‘Imran al-Sabi'i, an expert in theology, addressed the Imam (‘a) with politeness and admiration, saying: “O scholar of the people, were it not for that you invited (me) to question you, I would not question

you. I entered Kufa, Basrah, Syria (Sham) and al-Jazira. There I met some theologians but none of them was able to establish for me that the One, namely Allah is One who has no second, not other than Him standing through his oneness. May I question you?"

('Imran) al-Sabi'i put forth his deep question, and (said) that the (religious) scholars of Kufa, Basrah, Syria (Sham) and al-Jazira were not able to answer it. He asked the Imam ('a) to answer it. The Imam ('a) smiled at him, saying: "If there is (a person called) 'Imran al-Sabi'i among the group (of the people), then you are he."

"I am he", replied 'Imran.

"'Imran, question (me). You must be just. Beware of nonsense and injustice", declared the Imam ('a).

('Imran) al-Sabi'i bowed his head, and then he said to the Imam ('a) with politeness and magnification: "By Allah, my master, I want nothing except that you establish for me a thing to which I will cling and (which I) do not pass."

('Imran) al-Sabi'i expressed his good intention, for he wanted to understand the reality and nothing else.

The Imam ('a) said: "Question (me) whatever you desire."

The session was full of (religious) scholars and leaders; among them was Al-Ma'mun. They kept silent, that they might listen to 'Imran al-Sabi'i's questions and to the Imam's ('a) answers to them. Then ('Imran) al-Sabi'i put forth his questions as follows:

Q1: "Can you tell me about the first being and about what he created?" As for the thing about which ('Imran al-Sabi'i) questioned, it was the first thing and the first material from which Allah created all things. The thing about which he questioned was not the existence of Allah, the Almighty Originator. That is because Allah's existence can easily be recognized by those who have awareness and will, and have no doubt, for all things in the universe display the existence of their creator, for it is impossible for effect to exist without any cause. Now, let us listen to the answer of the Imam ('a) to this question:

Ans. 1: "As for the One, He has always been One Being; He has neither limits nor accidental qualities; and He will always remain so.

Then He created unprecedented, different creatures with accidental qualities and different limits, (i.e. He created them) not through a thing which He established nor through a thing which He limited nor according to a thing which He imitated or adopted as a previous exemplar for them. Then, after that, He made the creatures, choice and non–choice, different and harmonious (in) types and tastes. He (created them not) for a need of them nor for an excellent rank which He did not attain but through them nor did He see for Himself an increase or a decrease in what He created."

This paragraph gives an account of the Imam's (‘a) answer as follows:

Firstly, Allah, the Exalted, is One; there is nothing with Him; He has neither limits nor accidental qualities like those possible beings; He is One Being; He has always been and will always remain so. His Oneness is neither numeral nor qualitative nor generic; rather it means that He is not associated with material and immaterial things. He occupies the most perfect rank; none of possible beings is like Him, for they are ascribed to Him as made things ascribed to the maker, so Blessed is Allah!

Secondly, the view of the Bedouins was that every image should depend on and occupy a certain matter. This view is right regarding things other than the Necessary Being, the Most High. As for Him, He does not create things from previous things nor from a thing which He had created. Rather He says 'be' and it is. He originated the creation of things not according to a thing which He imitated or adopted as a model. He has the greatest power from which stems the creation of things of which He has no need, for He is the only source of favour toward creatures.

The Imam (‘a) turned to ‘Imran(al-Sabi'i) and asked him: "‘Imran, did you understand this (matter)?"

"Yes", he replied, "by Allah, master."

"The Imam (‘a) added:" "Know, ‘Imran, that if He had created what He created for a need, He would have not created anything except those whom He asked for help in His needs, and He should have created a hundredfold of what He created. That is because the more helpers there are, the more powerful their leader (sahib). As for need, ‘Imran, it is impossible, for whatever He creates, other needs arise, but

you can say that the creatures need each other. As a result I can saythat He did not create the creatures for a need, and He preferred some of them to others while He had no need of those whom he preferred; nor had He a vengeance on those whom He had abased."

This statement completes the previous one (and shows) that Allah, the Exalted, created the creatures while He had no need of them; rather they have need of His favour, His mercy, and His bestowal. He is absolutely munificent, so he spreads mercy and beneficence over all beings and creatures. An example of His bounty is that He prefers some of His creatures to others while He is in no need of those whom He prefers; nor has He a vengeance on those whom He abases.

Q2: "Master, was the being known to Himself by his own self?"

Ans. 2: He, peace be on him, said: "Knowledge is acquired by something which negates its opposite, so that the thing itself would exist through what it is negating, without the existence of anything which contradicts its existence; a need arises to negate that thing by defining what is known about it." Then the Imam ('a) turned to 'Imran and asked Him: "'Imran, did you understand?"

"Yes, by Allah, master", replied 'Imran. The result of the answer of the Imam ('a) was that what al-Sabi'i had mentioned would be correct if the known being was compared with many things opposing it, so it required the dismissal of those things in order to achieve the known (being). However, as for Allah, the Exalted, creator of the universe and giver of life, He had nothing to compare Himself with, so He was in no need of dismissal in order that He might decide His will through that dismissal.

Q3: "Tell me, then, by what means did He come to know what He knew with mind or without mind?"

By this question al-Sabi'i intended to force the Imam ('a) to confess that Allah, the Exalted, was compound, for He had mind.

Ans. 3: "If it had been by mind, would He then find a way not to appoint for that mind a boundary where knowledge ended?"

The Imam ('a) wanted (to say) that it was necessary for a mind to recognize His reality and essence. Then he asked him the following question: "Then what is that mind?"

Al-Sabi'i kept silent and was unable to say anything, for the Imam (‘a) did not leave any room for him to establish his belief. Then the Imam (‘a) turned to him and said: “Is it all right if I ask you about the mind and you define it by another mind? If you answer in the affirmative, then you would make both your claim and statement void.”

The Imam (‘a) established a perfect argument and definite proof of the voidness of the belief of al-Sabi'i, who thought that Allah, the Exalted, could be recognized by mind. Accordingly, there should be another mind to recognize the selfness of Him, the Exalted. This mind depends on another mind, and so on. This matter leads to an endless chain. If the second mind depends on the first mind, it will result in a vicious circle. The philosophers and theologians have unanimously agreed that neither (i.e., an endless chain and vicious circle) is corrupt because they result in corrupt matters. Then the Imam (‘a) completed his argument and his proof, saying: “‘Imran, is it not incumbent on you to know that the One cannot be described by mind, and it is not said that He has more than one deed, work, and creation. None imagines that He has views and members like those of the creatures. Therefore, understand that and correct (your beliefs) with it as long as you have come to know of (it).”

The Imam (‘a) wanted to say that Allah's different deeds and works were not similar to those of possible beings who were in need of means and mediations such as intellect and all manifest members to carry them out; it is impossible for Allah, the Exalted, to have such means and mediations.

Q4: “Do you not tell me what the boundaries of His creatures are?”

‘Imran questioned the Imam (‘a) about the boundaries which distinguish the creatures from each other. The Imam (‘a) answered him:

Ans. 4: “You have asked, then know that the boundaries of His creatures are of six kinds: touched, weighed, seen, that which has no taste (soul), seen but has no weight nor touch nor sense nor colour nor taste, ordination, accidental qualities, shapes, length, width. Among them are actions and movements which make things, do them, change them from state to state, increase them, and decrease them. As for

works and deeds, they set out, for they have no more time than that which is ordained for their need. When one act is finished, it sets out with movement, and effect remains. It takes the same course as speech, which goes while its effect remains."

The Imam's (‘a) answer was full of the mention of characteristics and qualities by which things are distinguished, whether they be living beings or not.

Q5: "Master, will you not tell me about the Creator? If He is One, there is nothing other than Him and nothing is with Him, has He not changed (His Essence) through His creating the creatures?"

This question means that the natural realities founded by Allah, the Exalted, require changing the Almighty Creator due to their change. This means that they are united with Him in His selfness; this is impossible.

Ans. 5: "He (Allah) is Eternal. He, the Great and Almighty, does not change through His creating the creatures, but the creatures change through His changing them."

What the Imam (‘a) meant with his answer was that the Almighty Creator is the Maker and Founder of all things and is Eternal, so He requires no change out of the change of possible beings and creatures.
Q6: "Master, how have we recognized Him?"

Ans. 6:"Through other than Him."

All the seen and the unseen things in the universe are evidence for the existence of the Almighty Creator. We have recognized Him through His creatures, and believed in Him through His marvelous creations. He has become manifest and clear during this time in which man has invaded outer space. The great creation of His, the Exalted, has manifest itself for mankind through what He has placedin this space, such as the stars which can neither be counted nor numbered, and which move according to their regulation and accuracy. If they leave their course, they will collide and disappear, and no trace of them will remain. So glory belongs to Allah, the Wise Originator!

Q7: "Which thing is other than Him?"

Ans. 7: "His desire, His name, His attribute, and more. All these are

originated, created, managed."

We have recognized Allah, the Exalted, through His will, His name, and His attributes, which are evidence for Him, may He be glorified. The supplication for the morning says: "Oh He who demonstrates His essence by His essence." All beings in the universe depend on Him as their creation depends on their maker.

Q8: "Master, which thing is He?"

Ans. 8: "He is light, namely He guides His creatures from among the people of the heaven and the earth. You have no right against me than my professing His oneness."

Through his question, 'Imran intended to know the reality of Allah, the Exalted. He imagined that He, the Exalted, was like other beings. This is impossible. Man does not know his own body and the small systems therein, so how can he know the essence of the almighty Creator, the shaper and originator of the world? The Imam ('a) answered that he came to know of Allah through His manifest attributes, such as His guiding of His creatures and other clear proofs which demonstrate the existence of their almighty creator.

Q9: "Master, was He not silent before (creating) the creatures and then He spoke?"

Ans. 9: "Silence is not except out of utterance before it. An example of that it is not said that the lamp is silent and does not utter; nor is it said that the lamp shines, so what does it want to do toward us, for light is from the lamp, not out of an act or creation from it; it is not a thing other than it. When it shines for us, we say: 'It has shone for us, so that we may seek light through it.' In this manner you can understand your affair."

The meaning of the answer of the Imam ('a) is that silence and utterance follow one another in a matter which accepts them like the succession of talent and non–talent. As for the utterance of Allah, it is not like the utterance of those speakers from among beings. In other words, utterance and silence do not hold good for Him as they hold good for any beings. The Shi~'ites believe that utterance is one of the attributes of action, and that it does not persist in the essence of Him, the Exalted, as the persisting of the essential attributes. That is

because it is He, the Exalted, Who creates utterance and speech when He wills (to create them). Imam Al-Rida (‘a) gave an example of that through the lamp, for it is not said that the lamp is silent, does not utter and, also ascribing the addition to the lamp, it is not an option for it (to utter). This is one of the possibilities regarding the explanation of the speech of the Imam (‘a).

Q10: “Master, the knowledge I have says that the being is changed in His essence by His action of creating.”

Ans. 10: “‘Imran, does your statement mean that the being does not in any way change its essence except when it affects its own essence in a way which changes it? Can you say that the fire changes its own nature, or that the heat burns itself, or have you seen anyone seeing his own vision?”

Q11: “Will you not tell me, master? Is He in the creatures or are the creatures in Him?”

Ans. 11: “He is above all that, ‘Imran. He is not in the creatures; nor are the creatures in Him; He is exalted above that. I will teach you what you do not know, and there is no strength save in Allah. Tell me about the mirror: are you in it or is it in you? If neither one of you is in the other, then how did you come to see your own reflection in it, ‘Imran?”

Q12: “Through the light between myself and it?” This question is related to that which is before it, and we have explained it.

Ans. 12: “Can you see of that light more than what you can see with your own eyes?”

“Yes,” replied ‘Imran.

“Then show it to us,” demanded the Imam.

‘Imran kept silent, not knowing what to say. For the Imam (‘a) did not leave any room for him to defend his own beliefs. Then the Imam (‘a) continued his talk, saying: “I do not see the light except leading you and the mirror to come to know each other without being in either one of you. There are many such examples which the ignorant simply cannot observe, and the greatest example belongs to Allah.”

The time of the prayer came. It was necessary for the Imam (‘a) to

postpone the debate, so he turned to Al-Ma'mun and said to him: "(The time of) the prayer has just come." 'Imran feared that the debate between him and the Imam ('a) would not be resumed, so he said to him: "Master, do not interrupt my questions, for my heart has sympathized (with you)."

The Imam ('a) promised to resume the debate, then he rose and performed the obligatory prayer.

Then the Imam ('a) turned to 'Imran and said to him: "'Imran, question me."

Q13: "Master, will you tell me about Allah, the Great and Almighty? Does He exist in His reality or in description?"

Ans. 13: "Verily, Allah is the Originator, the One, the first being. He has always been One. There is nothing with Him. He is single without a second with Him. He is neither known (i.e. in His reality) nor unknown nor clear nor ambiguous nor remembered nor forgotten nor a thing to which the title of a thing is applied nor from a time He was nor to a time He will be nor on a thing He stood nor on a thing He stands nor on a thing He depends nor in a thing He is hidden. All that was before the creation.[1]As for the whole you have applied to Him, it was an attribute which appeared later, and translation through which understands he who understands.

"Know that the meaning of origination (ibda'), will, and intention is one, but their titles are three. The first was His ('act' of) origination (ibda'), His will, and His intention which He made the origin of all things, evidence for all perceived things, separator of all vague things. All things were separated by these words, such as the name of right and wrong, action, doing, meaning other than meaning. All affairs gathered on them. When He originated the words, He did not make meaning for them other than themselves. They came to an end and had no existence, for they originated in an origination.

"The light in this place, which is the light of the heavens and the earth, is the first action of Allah. As for the letters, they are the thing with which speech is concerned. All the acts of worship were from Allah, the Great and Almighty. He taught them to His creatures. They are thirty–three letters. Twenty–eight letters of them indicate the letters of Arabic. Twenty–two of the twenty–eight letters show the letters of

Assyrian and Hebrew. Five letters of them were changed in the rest of the languages of non–Arabs in the regions. These five letters were derived from the twenty–five letters, so the letters became thirty–three. As for the five different (letters), it is not permissible to mention more than what we have mentioned. Then He made the letters after He had counted and firmly numbered them. So His sign was like these words of His, the Exalted: 'Be and it is.' Make, be from it, and be made from it. So the first creature of Allah, the Great and Almighty, was the origination which had neither weight nor movement nor hearing nor colour nor sense; the second creature was the letters which had neither weight nor colour. They were heard and described; (none) looked at them. As for the third creature, it was all the kinds which were sensed, touched, with taste, and seen. As for Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, He was before the letters which indicate nothing other than themselves." Al-Ma'mun admired his answer and did not understand most of the meanings of these deep words which we will leave without any explanation, for it would take a long time to explain them. Then he asked the Imam ('a): "How can they (i.e. the letters) indicate nothing other than themselves?"

The Imam ('a) answered him and explained the matter for him, saying: "Surely Allah, the Blessed and Most High never gathered a thing from them for another meaning. When He created from them four, five or six words or more than that or less than that, He created them for a certain meaning, and they were not for anything except for an originated meaning, which was nothing before then.

Q14: "How can we come to know of that?"

Ans. 14: "As for the way and explaining knowledge, it is: You mention the letters when you want nothing other than they themselves. You mention them one by one when you say: Alif, ba', ta' tha', jeem, ha', kha', until you have finished. You will find no meaning other than they themselves. When you gather them and make from them (a group of) letters and make from them the name and adjective for a certain meaning, you will not seek the meaning of what you have meant. They are proof of their meanings and the cause of the thing described by them. Did you understand that?"

"Yes", was the answer.

The Imam (‘a) continued his speech about explaining the meanings of the letters when they were put together, saying: “Know that it (the letter) is not an adjective of that which is not described nor a boundary of that which is not bound. As for the attributes and the names, they indicate perfection and existence, not an example of encompassment like boundaries which make a square, a triangle or a hexagon. That is because Allah, the Great and Almighty, is known by the attributes and the names, not by limits, such as length, width, size, quantity, colour, weight, and the like. None of these limits is applied to Allah, that His creatures may know Him through knowing themselves, according to the necessity which we have mentioned.

“However, Allah, the Great and Almighty is indicated by His attributes, known by His names, and His creatures are proofs of Him, that the willing seeker concerning that may be in no need of the vision of an eye nor the hearing of an ear nor the touch of a palm nor the encompassment of a heart. If His attributes, great is His laudation, do not indicate Him; His names do not summon to Him; the knowledge of the creatures does not perceive His core; the creatures will worship His names and His attributes, not His core. If this is so, then the one god will be other than Allah, for his attributes and his names are other than Him. Did you understand, ‘Imran?”

“Yes, master, continue”, replied ‘Imran.

The Imam continued his interesting speech after he had gained mastery over those who attended the session. He said: “Beware of the statement of the ignorant from among blindness and error who claim that Allah, the Great and All–holy, exists in the hereafter for reckoning concerning reward and punishment, and He is not in the world for the acts of obedience and hope. If Allah, the Great and Almighty, has defects in this world, he will never be in the next. However, people have gone astray, become blind and deaf toward the truth while they do not know. That is according to the words of Him, the Great and Almighty: And whoever is blind in the world shall also be blind in the hereafter and will err more from the path.[1] I mean that he is blind toward existing realities. Those who have intellect know that the proof of what is there in the next world is only through what is here in the world. He who takes the knowledge of that (world according to his own view, seeks its existence and perceives it through

his own soul, and not through other than it, and increases nothing of the knowledge of that (world) but fairness for Allah, the Great and Almighty, has placed the knowledge of that (world) with a special group of people who think, know, and understand."

Q15: "Master, tell me about origination: Is it creation or other than creation?"

Ans. 15: "Rather it (origination) is still creation and is not perceived through stillness. It becomes creation for it is something originated. It is Allah who originates it and it becomes His creature. Allah, the Great and Almighty, creates it, and there is no third thing between them, and no third thing is other than them. So what Allah the Great and Almighty creates is His creature. Perhaps the creatures are still, moving, different, harmonious, known, and ambiguous. All the bound things are the creatures of Allah, the Great and Almighty. Know that all the things which the senses find for you are meanings perceived by the senses, and every sense demonstrates what Allah, the Great and Almighty, has placed in its perception, and the heart understands all of that. Know that the One who stands without any ordination or boundaries created creatures ordained by boundaries and ordination, and what He creates is two creatures: the ordination and the ordained. In each of them there is no colour nor weight nor taste. He makes one of them perceive the other and makes them perceive by their nature. He does not create a single thing standing in its nature without other than it which He wills to be proof of His selfness and His existence, so Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, is Single and One; there is no second with Him in order to make Him stand, to support Him and to hide Him. The creatures hold each other through the permission and will of Allah, the Exalted. Men have differed regarding this subject to the extent that they have gone astray, become perplexed, and sought salvation from darkness with darkness through their describing Allah, the Exalted, with their own qualities, so they have moved far away from the truth. If they describe Allah, the Great and Almighty, with His own attributes, and describe the creatures with their own qualities, they will profess understanding and certainty, and will not differ over (Him). When they seek that about which they are perplexed, they become confused. Allah guides whomever He wishes to the straight path."

Q16: "I witness that He is just as you have described. However, I have another question."

"Question whatever you desire."

"I want to question you about the All–wise (Allah): In which thing is He? Does anything encompass Him?

Does He change from state to state? Is He in need of a thing?"

Ans. 16: "I will tell you, 'Imran, so understand about whom you have questioned. He is the most ambiguous matter which the creatures face. As for those whose reasoning is different and whose clemency is distant, they do not recognize (Him). As for those who are just and have reason, they are able to recognize (Him). As for the first (thing) of these: If the creation of what He creates is out of His need of it, it is permissible for one to say: He changes according to what He creates because of His need of that. However, He, the Great and Almighty, does not create anything out of need, and He is still firm, not in a thing nor on a thing, but it is the creatures which hold each other, enter into one another, and come forth from each other. As for Allah, the Great and All–holy, He holds the whole of that through His power. He does not enter a thing and come out of it. The preservation of it does not tire Him, nor is He incapable of holding it. None of the creatures knows how that is –only Allah, the Great and Almighty, His messengers whom He informed of it, the people of His secrets, those who keep His command, and His guardians who undertake His law. Rather, His command is like the twinkling of an eye. If He wills a thing, He only says to it: Be, so there it is, in accordance with His desire and will. Nothing is nearer to Him than a thing; nothing is farther from Him than a thing. Did you understand, 'Imran?"

"Yes, master", replied 'Imran. Then he said: "I witness that Allah, the Most High, is as you have described, and witness that Muhammad (s) and His servants ('a) are sent with guidance and the religion of the truth."

Then he prostrated himself in prayer before Allah and submitted to Him. The religious scholars and the theologians admired the Imam's ('a) knowledge and talents; hence they told the people about his excellence and abundant knowledge. As for Al-Ma'mun, he drowned in pain, harboured malice against the Imam ('a), envied him, and then

left the session.

Muhammad ibn Ja'far, the Imam's (‘a) uncle, feared Al-Ma'mun and the safety of the Imam (‘a). He attended the session and saw the Imam's (‘a) domination over ‘Imran al-Sabi'i, who was an excellent philosopher of the time, so he summoned al-Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Nawfali, the Imam's (‘a) companion, and said to him: "Have you not seen what your companion (the Imam -as-) brought?" "No, by Allah", said al-Nawfali, "I think that Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (‘a) has never gone into anything, and we do not know him through it. He always speaks about theology in Madinah and the theologians gather before him."

Then al-Nawfali informed him of the Imam's (‘a) knowledge and excellence, saying: "The pilgrims come to him and ask him about the lawful and the unlawful, and he answers them. Perhaps he goes into theology when someone comes to him and debates with him."

However, Muhammad expressed his fear of Al-Ma'mun for his nephew, saying: "I fear that this man (i.e. Al-Ma'mun) will envy him, give him poison (to drink), and create an affliction against him. So advise him to refrain from these things."

As for al-Nawfali, he had good opinion of Al-Ma'mun and did not fear him for the Imam's (‘a) sake, so he said to Muhammed: "Al-Ma'mun wants nothing except to examine him, that he may know whether he (the Imam -as-) has something of the knowledge of his fathers." Muhammad was not satisfied with al-Nawfali's statement, for he thought that Al-Ma'mun was wicked, so he said to al-Nawfali: "Say to him (Al-Rida-as-): Your uncle dislikes this chapter (of theology) and asks you to refrain from these things for several reasons...."

The Imam's (‘a) uncle was right in his intuition, for he knew that the 'Abbasid family harboured malice towards the members of the House (ahl al-Bayt) (‘a), and showed enmity toward them. Moreover, (‘Imran) al-Sabi'i's questions and his adopting Islam at the hand of the Imam (‘a) moved the spite of Al-Ma'mun and he assassinated him, as we will see in the following chapters.

Al-Nawfali related (the message) to the Imam (‘a) and he thanked him for them and prayed for him.

Through his debates, the Imam (‘a) made ‘Imran adopt Islam. This was a great achievement, for the latter was the most prominent scholar of his time. The Imam (‘a) sent for him. When he came, the Imam (‘a) welcomed and received him with honour. He then gave him garments and ten thousand dirhams. ‘Imran was pleased with this, so he prayed for the Imam (‘a) and thanked him for this, saying: “May I be your ransom, you have followed the deeds of your grandfather, the Commander of the faithful (‘a).”

‘Imran frequently came to the Imam (‘a) and made use of his abundant knowledge. After that, as the historians say, he became a summoner to Islam. Theologians from among the possessors of statements and innovations came to him and asked him about the most important questions. He answered their questions to such an extent that he made them avoid him. Al-Ma’mun gave him ten thousand dirhams and, in addition, al-Fadl gave him some money. Then they appointed him governor over the charities of Balkh, and he did good work.

3. His Dialogue with Ali ibn al-Jahm

Ali ibn Ibrahim ibn Hashim narrated from Qasim ibn Muhammad Barmakide who narrated from Abu Salt Harawi: “Al-Ma’mungathered the people of thoughts and beliefs from among the followers of different religions like Christianity, Judaism, Magian and Sabi'ites to enter into discussion against Imam Al-Rida (‘a). Each of them when entering into discussion with Imam (‘a) was defeated so easily by the Imam (‘a) that they kept as quiet as if they had put stones in their mouth.

Among the Imam's (‘a) debates with the rhetoricians and men of religion is that which took place between him and Ali ibn al-Jahm, who asked the Imam (‘a): “Do you believe in the infallibility of the prophets?”

“Yes”, replied the Imam (‘a).

He opposed the Imam (‘a) with these verses, saying:

“What do you say about these words of Allah, the Great and Almighty: And Adam disobeyed his Lord, so his life became evil (to him), these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: And remember Tha al-Nun when he departed in wrath; he imagined that we had no

power over him, His words, the Great and Almighty, concerning Yusuf: And (with passionate lust) did she desire him, and he would have desired her, His words, the Great and Almighty, concerning Dawud: And Dawud was sure that we had tried him, and His words, the exalted, concerning His prophet, Muhammad (s): And you concealed in your soul what Allah would bring to light?"

The Imam ('a) criticized Ali ibn al-Jahm for interpreting the verses according to his viewpoints without knowledge of their explanation and interpretation. He recited their interpretation to him, saying: "Woe unto you, Ali! Fear Allah. Do not ascribe transgressions to the prophets, and do not interpret Allah's book according to your opinion, for Allah, the Great and Almighty, says: And none knows its interpretation except Allah and those deeply grounded in knowledge."

The Imam ('a) began interpreting these verses, saying: "As for these words of His, the Great and Almighty, concerning Adam: And Adam disobeyed his lord, so his life became evil (to him), surely Allah, the Great and Almighty, created Adam as argument on His earth and vicegerent in His land. He did not create him for the garden. Adam's transgression took place in the garden, not on earth, and his infallibility in question should be on earth, that the ordinations of Allah's command may be complete. When he descended to earth and was appointed as an argument and vicegerent, he was protected from transgression with these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: Allah did indeed choose Adam and Nuh, the family of Ibrahim, and the family of 'Imran above all people.

"As regarding His words, the Great and Almighty: And (remember) DhalNun when he departed in wrath; he imagined that we had no power over him; the meaning of 'he imagined that we had no power over him' is that he realized that Allah was not going to sustain him. Have you not heard these words of Him, the Exalted: But when He tries him differently, then straitens to him his means of subsistence? Had he thought that Allah was unable to overpower him, then he would have committed faithlessness(kufr)." As for His words, the Great and Almighty, concerning Yusuf: And with passionate lust did she desire him, and he would have desired her, they are that she wanted to commit a sin while he desired to kill her if she forced him; therefore, Allah saved him from the deed of killing her and its terrible

consequences, and these are His words, the Great and Almighty: Thus it was that we might turn away from him evil and indecency, meaning killing and fornication."

The Imam (‘a) turned to Ali ibn al-Jahm and asked him: "What did those before you say about him?"

Ali ibn al-Jahm started reciting to the Imam (‘a) what had been handed down from them on interpreting the verse, saying: [They said:] "Surely Dawud, peace be on him, was praying in his mihrab. Iblis appeared in front of him in the form of the most beautiful bird. Dawud ceased his prayer and went to take the bird. The bird went out to the house, and then it went out to the top of the house. Dawud descended looking for it. The bird alighted in the house of Uryah ibn Hanan. Dawud followed the tracks of the bird, and suddenly there was Uryah's wife washing. When he looked at her, he fell in love with her. As for Uryah, he had been on a raid. Dawud wrote to his companion: 'Place Uryah in front of the coffin, ' and he was placed in front of it. Uryah defeated the polytheists. Dawud found that difficult, so he wrote to him again in order to place Uryah in front of the coffin. Uryah was placed in front of it and he was killed, so Dawud married his wife."

In this narration fornication and the forbidden have been attributed to one of the prophets of Allah the Most High. Besides the narration contains a fable which is that Dawud followed the bird. As for the Imam (‘a) he was displeased with this narration when he heard it and said: "We belong to Allah and to Him is our return! You have described one of Allah's prophets as neglecting his prayers and accused him of going out and looking for the tracks of the bird, fornication and killing!"

Ali ibn al-Jahm asked the Imam (‘a) to explain the matter to him, saying: "Son of Allah's Apostle, what was Dawud's sin?"

The Imam (‘a) told him about the true story of Dawud, saying: "Dawud thought that he was more learned than the rest of Allah's creatures, hence Allah, the Great and Almighty, sent him some angels and they climbed the mihrab and said to him: When they entered in to Dawud and he was frightened of them, they said: Fear not; two litigants, of whom one has acted wrongfully towards the other;

therefore, decide between us with justice, and do not act unjustly, and guide us to the right way: Surely this is my brother; he has ninety–nine ewes and I have a single one; but he said, make it over to me, and he has prevailed against me in discourse. Dawud hurried to decide the case for the plaintiff when he said: Surely he has been unjust to you in demanding your ewe to add) to his own ewes. He did not ask the plaintiff for the evidence for that; nor did he turn to the defendant and ask him: 'What do you say?' It was an error only within the framework of the case and was not as you thought. Have you not heard that Allah, the Great and Almighty, said: Dawud, surely we have made you a ruler in the land; so judge between men with justice and do not follow desire."

Ibn al-Jahm asked the Imam ('a) to tell him about the story of Dawud and Uryah, saying: "Then, son of Allah's Apostle, what is Dawud's story with Uryah."

The Imam ('a) started explaining Dawud's story, saying: "In the days of Dawud, a widow never got married after the death of her husband. Dawud, peace be on him, was the first man whom Allah permitted to marry the widow whose husband had been killed. Accordingly, he married Uryah's wife after he had been killed, and her waiting period had been over. This made the people accuse Dawud of killing Uryah."

As for Muhammed, (s), and these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: And you concealed in your soul what Allah would bring out to light, and you feared men, and Allah had a greater right that you should fear Him, surely Allah made His prophet (s) know the names of his wives in this world and the next, and that they were the mothers of the believers. One of them whom Allah let him know was Zainab, daughter of Jahsh, who was then the wife of Zayd ibn Haritha. He (the Prophet (s) concealed her name in his soul and did not declare it, lest a hypocrite would say: 'He (the Prophet (s)) says that one of his wives, who are the mothers of the believers, is in a man's house (i.e. she is still the man's wife). He feared the words of the hypocrites, hence Allah, the Great and Almighty, said to him: and you feared men, and Allah had a greater right that you should fear Him, namely in your own soul. Allah, the Great and Almighty, never undertook marrying any of His creatures except Hawwa' (Eve) to Adam, and Zainab (daughter of Jahsh) to Allah's Messenger (s), by the virtue of His

words: But when Zayd had accomplished his want of her, We gave her to you as a wife, and Fatimah to Ali, peace be on him."

When Ali ibn al-Jahm heard that, he wept and said: "Son of Allah's Apostle (‘a), I am going to return to Allah, the Great and Almighty, in repentance and will never say after this day of mine anything about the prophets of Allah except what you have mentioned."[1]

4. His Dialogue with the Head of Catholics

Ali ibn Ibrahim ibn Hashim quoted on the authority of his father, on the authority of Safwan ibn Yahya– Al-Saberi's friend, "Abu Qurra – a friend of al-Jaseliq – asked me to take him to the meeting held by Al-Rida (‘a). I requested permission to do so. Then the Imam (‘a) (granted permission and) said, 'Bring him in.' Then when Abu Qurra entered, he kissed the rug beneath the Imam's (‘a) feet and said, 'This is how our religion has instructed us to treat the noble ones of our era. May God keep you healthy. What is your opinion about one group who has a claim and another group that is known to be just and acknowledges their claim?' The Imam (‘a) said, 'Their claim is right.' Then Abu Qurra asked, 'What about another group who have a claim, but cannot find any witnesses to prove their claim other than themselves?' The Imam (‘a) replied, 'Their claim is rejected.' Abu Qurra man said, 'Now we claim that Jesus is the spirit of God and His word which He induced into the blessed Mary (‘a). The Muslims agree with us regarding this claim. However, the Muslims claim that Muhammad (s) is a Prophet of God, but we do not acknowledge their claim. Therefore what both groups agree upon is better than what they disagree upon.' Then Al-Rida (‘a) asked him, 'What is your name?' He said, 'John.' The Imam (‘a) replied, 'O John! We believe in Jesus (‘a)–the son of the blessed Mary (‘a) and the spirit of God– and His word who believed in Muhammad (s). Jesus (‘a) gave the glad tidings of Muhammad's (s) coming, and Jesus (‘a) himself confessed that he was a servant who has a lord. Then if the Jesus in whom you believe is not so, and he does not believe in Muhammad (s) and does not believe in being a servant of God and does not accept God the Glorious the

1. **Saduq, al-Amali**, p. 55.

Exalted to be his lord, then we reject such a Jesus (‘a). Then how could we reject him and you claim that we agree with each other?’ Then (John) Abu Qurra stood up and told me (i.e. Safwan ibn Yahya), ‘Stand up. This meeting was not beneficial to us.’”[1]

[Abu Qurra said this because he had failed to defeat Imam Al-Rida (‘a).]

5. Discussion with Muslim scholars

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) was attendant in a session that included the best scholars of Iraq and Khurasan when Al-Ma’mun asked them about the exegesis of God’s saying:

﴿ثُمَّ أَوۡرَثۡنَا ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱصۡطَفَيۡنَا مِنۡ عِبَادِنَا﴾

“We gave the book as an inheritance to our chosen servants, among whom some are unjust against their souls, some are moderate, and some are exceedingly virtuous by the permission of God. This is indeed a great favour.”[2]

They answered that the verse refers to all the umma.

Al-Ma’mun then turned to Imam Al-Rida (‘a) and asked for his opinion. The Imam (‘a) answered:

I do not agree with them. I say that God the Blessed refers to the immaculate progeny of the Prophet (s) exclusively.

Al-Ma’munasked for an explanation. The Imam (‘a) explained:

If God referred to the umma, they should all be in paradise. This is for His saying: …among whom some are unjust against their souls, some are moderate, and some are exceedingly virtuous by the permission of God. This is indeed a great favour.

God then informs that all of them will be in paradise. He the Majestic said:

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:230
2. *Surat, Fatir, 35:32.*

﴿ فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِۦ وَمِنْهُم مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌۢ بِٱلْخَيْرَٰتِ بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ ٱلْفَضْلُ ٱلْكَبِيرُ﴾

"But of them are some who wrong themselves and of them are some who are ambivalent, and of them are some who outstrip (others) through good deeds, by Allah's leave. That is the great favour!"[1]

﴿جَنَّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا ﴾

"They will enter the gardens of Eden."[2]

Thus, the verse refers to the immaculate progeny of the Prophet (s) exclusively.

Imam Al-Rida ('a) then added:

The immaculate progeny are those whom God describes in His book by saying:

﴿ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ﴾

"People of the house, God wants to remove all kinds of uncleanness from you and to purify you thoroughly."[3]

The Prophet (s) said about them:

"I am leaving among you the two weighty things– the Book of God and my progeny; my family ('a). They will not depart from each other until they join me at the divine pool. Consider how will you regard me in treating them. O people, do not suggest to them, because they are more knowledgeable than you.

The scholars asked Abul–Hassan ('a) whether the progeny of the Prophet (s) and the Prophet's family ('a) were the same.

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1. *SuratFatir, 35:32*.
2. *SuratFatir, 35:33*.
3. *SuratAl-Ahzab, 33:33*.

The Imam (‘a) answered that they were the same.

The scholars claimed that the Prophet (s) is quoted as saying, “My umma is my family”, and the Prophet’s (s) companions agreed unanimously on the fact that Muhammed’s (s) family was his umma.

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said:

Well, tell me whether it is lawful for Muhammed’s (s) family to have any alms in their possession.

“No, it is unlawful”, answered the scholars. Then the Imam (‘a) asked:

Tell me whether it is lawful for the umma to have alms in possession.

“Yes, it is lawful for them”, they answered.

The Imam (‘a) commented:

This is one difference between Muhammed’s (s) family and the umma. Woe to you! Where are you misled? Do you ignore the Qur’an or are you transgressing people? Did you not know that this narrative is obviously dedicated to the guided choice ones exclusively?[1]

“How can you prove this, Abul–Hassan?” asked the scholars.

The Imam (‘a) answered:

This is clear in God’s saying:

﴿وَلَقَدۡ أَرۡسَلۡنَا نُوحٗا وَإِبۡرَٰهِيمَ وَجَعَلۡنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا ٱلنُّبُوَّةَ وَٱلۡكِتَٰبَۖ فَمِنۡهُم مُّهۡتَدٖۖ وَكَثِيرٞ مِّنۡهُمۡ فَٰسِقُونَ﴾

“We sent Noah and Abraham and placed prophethood and the book among their offspring, some of whom have the right guidance.

1. In ‘'Uyun Akhbar al- Rida’, this statement is recorded in the following form:“Did you not know that the inheritance –of the Book that is mentioned in the first Verse- and the purity –that is mentioned in the second- are dedicated to the guided choice ones?”The statement that is recorded in ‘'Uyun Akhbar al- Rida’, seems to be more accurate.

However, most of them are evildoers."[1]

Hence, the inheritance of the book is dedicated to the guided ones, not the evildoers.

In his supplication to his Lord, Noah said –as God relates in the Qur'an–:

﴿فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنَّ ٱبۡنِي مِنۡ أَهۡلِي وَإِنَّ وَعۡدَكَ ٱلۡحَقُّ﴾

"Lord, my son is a member of my family. Your promise is always true and you are the best judge."[2]

He said so after God had promised to save him and his family. However, God the Exalted answered him:

﴿إِنَّهُۥ لَيۡسَ مِنۡ أَهۡلِكَۖ إِنَّهُۥ عَمَلٌ غَيۡرُ صَٰلِحٖۖ فَلَا تَسۡـَٔلۡنِ مَا لَيۡسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلۡمٌۖ إِنِّيٓ أَعِظُكَ أَن تَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلۡجَٰهِلِينَ﴾

"He is not one of your family. He is a man of unrighteous deeds. Do not ask me about that of which you have no knowledge. I advise you not to become an ignorant person."[3]

Al-Ma'mun asked: "Did God give distinction to the Prophet's (s) progeny over people?"

The Imam ('a) answered:

God the Majestic the Omnipotent gave distinction of the Prophet's (s) progeny over people in the wise book.

Al-Ma'mun asked for examples, and the Imam ('a) cited:

God says:

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصۡطَفَىٰٓ ءَادَمَ وَنُوحٗا وَءَالَ إِبۡرَٰهِيمَ وَءَالَ عِمۡرَٰنَ عَلَى ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ٣٣﴾

1. *Surat Al-Hadid, 57:26.*
2. *Surat Hud, 11:45.*
3. *SuratHud, 11:46.*

ذُرِّيَّةَۢ بَعۡضُهَا مِنۢ بَعۡضٖ﴾

"God chose (and gave distinction to) Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham, and Imran over all the people of the world. They were the offspring of one another."[1]

In another place in the Qur'an, God says:

﴿أَمۡ يَحۡسُدُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ عَلَىٰ مَآ ءَاتَىٰهُمُ ٱللَّهُ مِن فَضۡلِهِۦۖ فَقَدۡ ءَاتَيۡنَآ ءَالَ إِبۡرَٰهِيمَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ وَءَاتَيۡنَٰهُم مُّلۡكًا عَظِيمٗا﴾

"Are they jealous of the favours that God has given to some people? We have given to the family of Abraham the book, wisdom, and a great kingdom."[2]

Then God referred this to the believers to whom he addressed:

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَمۡرِ مِنكُمۡ﴾

"Believers, obey God, His messenger, and your (qualified) leaders."[3]

In the previous verse, God referred to the qualified leaders to whom He gave the book and wisdom in inheritance, but people envied them for these two things as He affirmed: "Are they jealous of the favours that God has given to some people? We have given to the family of Abraham the book, wisdom, and a great kingdom." The favours stand for obligatory obedience to the immaculate chosen ('a) and the great kingdom stands for obedience to them.

"Does God the Elevated explain this selection in the book?" asked the scholars. The Imam ('a) answered:

God explains this selection clearly in twelve verses in the book and refers to it in many verses whose meanings are hidden.

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1. *SuratAl Imran, 3:33-34.*
2. *Surat al-Nisa, 4:54.*
3. *Surat al-Nisa, 4:59.*

First, it is explained in God's saying:

﴿وَأَنذِرۡ عَشِيرَتَكَ ٱلۡأَقۡرَبِينَ﴾

"And warn your nearest relations."[1]

Ubay ibn Ka'b adds 'and your selected family, ' to the previous verse, and the addition is recorded in Abdullah ibn Mas'ud's copy of the Holy Qur'an. When Othman (bin Affan) ordered Zaid ibn Thabit to compile the Qur'an, he bypassed that statement, which is certainly a sublime standing, a great excellence, and a grand honour for the Prophet's (s) family who are exclusively stated in the previous verse.

The second verse of the selection is God's saying:

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذۡهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجۡسَ أَهۡلَ ٱلۡبَيۡتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمۡ تَطۡهِيرًا﴾

"People of the house, God wants to remove all kinds of uncleanness from you and purify you thoroughly."[2]

Except the obstinate, no one can deny this merit because it is obviously clear.

The third selected verse is that in which God gave distinction to the Immaculates over all others and ordered His Prophet (s) saying:

﴿نَدۡعُ أَبۡنَآءَنَا وَأَبۡنَآءَكُمۡ وَنِسَآءَنَا وَنِسَآءَكُمۡ وَأَنفُسَنَا وَأَنفُسَكُمۡ ثُمَّ نَبۡتَهِلۡ فَنَجۡعَل لَّعۡنَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَى ٱلۡكَٰذِبِينَ﴾

"If anyone disputes your prophesy after knowledge has come to you, say, "Let each of us bring our children, women, and ourselves to one place and pray to God to condemn the liars among us."[3]

The Prophet (s) carried out this order when he brought Ali, Al-Hasan, Al-Hussein, and Fatimah ('a) to pray to God to condemn the lying

1. *Surat Al-Shu'ara', 26:214.*
2. *Surat Al-Ahzab, 33:33.*
3. *Surat Al Imran, 3: 61.*

party. Thus, God added them to the Prophet (s). Do you know the indication of God's saying: "…and ourselves…?"

The scholars said: "This is the Prophet's (s) personality."

Imam Al-Rida ('a) commented:

This is not accurate. It is an indication to Ali ('a). This can be proved by the Prophet's (s) saying: "Let the Luhai'as continue and I will subjugate them to a man who is like myself–Ali." No one can precede this particularity, disagree about this virtue, or overtake this honour. Thus, the Prophet (s) compared Ali's personality to his.

The fourth selected verse is that when the Prophet (s) ordered everybody to leave the mosque except his family. People showed dissatisfaction for such a procedure and Al-Abbas discussed it with the Prophet (s), but the Prophet (s) answered: "It was not I who dismissed you all with the exception of Ali. It was God who did so." This is a clear explanation of the Prophet's (s) saying to Ali: "Your relation to me is as same as Aaron to Moses."

"What is the relation between this and the Qur'an?" asked the scholars.

Imam Al-Rida ('a) answered:

This is in the Qur'an in God's saying:

﴿وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَن تَبَوَّءَا لِقَوْمِكُمَا بِمِصْرَ بُيُوتًا وَٱجْعَلُوا۟ بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً﴾

"We sent a revelation to Musa and his brother to build houses for their people in the pharaoh's town and to build them facing one another."[1]

This verse shows Aaron's relation to Musa. It also shows Ali's standing to the Prophet (s). Besides, there is clear evidence in the Prophet's (s) saying: "Except for Muhammad and Muhammed's

1. *Surat Younus, 10:87.*

family, all the ceremonially impure and the menstruant are forbidden from entering this mosque."

"This explanation and evidence cannot be found with anyone other than you, the Prophet's family ('a)", said the scholars.

Imam Al-Rida ('a) commented:

Who can deny this fact? The Prophet (s) said: "I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its portal. He whoever takes himself to the city of knowledge should first see its portal."

The previous clear explanation of the virtue, honour, preference, selection, and immaculacy cannot be denied by anyone except the obstinate. All praise belongs to God for this.

The fifth selected verse is God's saying:

﴿وَءَاتِ ذَا ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُۥ﴾

"Give the relatives their dues."[1]

Almighty God gave this particularity to the Prophet's family ('a) exclusively as a sign of their distinction over the umma. When this verse was revealed to the Prophet (s), he summoned Fatimah, his daughter, and said to her, "Fadak is one of the territories that we did not exhaust our horses or camels to seize; therefore, it is mine exclusively[2]. Now, I give it to you and your offspring according to God's instructions."

The sixth selected verse is God's saying:

﴿ قُل لَّآ أَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا ٱلْمَوَدَّةَ فِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ ﴾

"(Muhammad (s)), say: "I do not ask you for any payment for my

1. *Surat Al-Israa, 17:26.*
2. This is an indication of God's saying –in *Surat al-Hashr*, *59:6*.
"Since you did not have to exhaust your horses and camels or (even fight), God granted to His Messenger their property. God gives authority to His Messenger over whomever He wants. God has power over all things. "

preaching to you except (your) love of (my near) relatives."[1]

This is a particularity for the Prophet (s) and his family exclusively. Relating the sayings of Noah ('a), God the Majestic says:

﴿وَيَـٰقَوْمِ لَآ أَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا ۖ إِنْ أَجْرِىَ إِلَّا عَلَى ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَمَآ أَنَا۠ بِطَارِدِ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ ۚ إِنَّهُم مُّلَـٰقُوا۟ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَـٰكِنِّىٓ أَرَىٰكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ﴾

"My people, I do not ask any payment for what I preach to you. No one except God has to give me any reward. I do not drive away those who have faith (in my teaching); they will all receive mercy from their lord. I know that you are ignorant people."[2]

Relating the sayings of Hud the prophet ('a), God says:

﴿يَـٰقَوْمِ لَآ أَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ۖ إِنْ أَجْرِىَ إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلَّذِى فَطَرَنِى ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ﴾

"My people, I do not ask any reward for what I have preached to you. No one can give me my reward except my creator. Will you then not take heed?"[3]

For the Prophet Muhammad (s), God orders him:

Say, "I do not ask you for any payment for my preaching to you except your love of my near) relatives."

God imposes the love of the Prophet's relatives ('a) only when He knows that they will never apostatize and they will never deviate.

It happens that a man may bear malice in his heart towards another, who is an intimate friend of his, when a member of the family of the former is an opponent to the latter. On that account, God wants to make the Prophet's (s) heart completely free of malice towards the believers; therefore, he ordered them to love the Prophet's family ('a). The Prophet (s) will not then hate anybody who loves his family and

1. *Surat Al-Shura, 42:23.*
2. *Surat Hud, 11:29.*
3. *Surat Hud, 11: 51.*

him. In the same manner, the Prophet (s) will hate those who dislike his family, because they have ignored one of the duties of God. This is surely the highest honour.

When the previous verse was revealed, the Prophet (s) addressed a sermon to his companions. He said: "All praise and gratitude is due to Allah. O people, God has imposed upon you a task. Will you carry it out?" No one answered him. He therefore repeated the same on the second day. But nobody answered him, too. On the third day, he added: "O people, it is not gold, silver, food, or drink that you should pay." Thus, they asked what it was. The Prophet (s) then recited the Verse: "I do not ask you for any payment for my preaching to you except your love of my near relatives."" They agreed to carry out this commandment. Unfortunately, most of them did not.

My father related to me that Al-Hussein ibn Ali ('a) had narrated the following:

Muhajirs and Ansar came to the Prophet (s) to offer him their estates and souls since, they claimed, he had to spend great sums of his own wealth on his personal expenditures in addition to the continuous visits of the delegations. As a result, God the Majestic sent the faithful spirit –the angel Gabriel– to convey this to the Prophet (s), who said: "I do not ask you for any payment for my preaching to you except (your) love of (my near) relatives."" This means that you should not hurt my relatives after my death.

As they left, some of them murmured, "He rejected our offers only by urging us to accept (the leadership of) his relatives after his death. This was surely something he himself invented in that session. They also said horrible things that made God reveal His saying:

﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ ٱفْتَرَىٰهُ ۖ قُلْ إِنِ ٱفْتَرَيْتُهُۥ فَلَا تَمْلِكُونَ لِى مِنَ ٱللَّهِ شَيْـًٔا ۖ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ ۖ كَفَىٰ بِهِۦ شَهِيدًۢا بَيْنِى وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۖ وَهُوَ ٱلْغَفُورُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ﴾

"They say, "(Muhammad -s-) has invented it himself." Say, "Had I invented it, you would not have been able to rescue me from God. He

knows best what you say about it. He is our witness and He is All–forgiving and All–merciful."[1]

Accordingly, the Prophet (s) summoned them and wondered whether they had done something due to which the verse was revealed. They confessed that they had said horrible things. When the Prophet (s) recited the verse before them, they wept heavily. Hence, God revealed:

﴿وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِى يَقْبَلُ ٱلتَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَعْفُواْ عَنِ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾

"It is He who accepts the repentance of His servants, forgives their evil deeds and knows all that you do."[2]

The seventh verse of selection is God's saying:

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَمَلَـٰٓئِكَتَهُۥ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى ٱلنَّبِىِّ ۚ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ صَلُّواْ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُواْ تَسْلِيمًا﴾

"God showers His blessings upon the Prophet (s) and the angels seek forgiveness for him. Believers, pray for the Prophet (s) and greet him with, "Peace be with you."[3]

All the obstinate realize that when this verse was revealed, some people came to the Prophet (s) and asked him to teach them how to pray for him. He (s) instructed, "Say: O Allah, bless Muhammad (s) and Muhammed's family ('a) the way You blessed Abraham and Abraham's family. You are surely praiseworthy and glorious."

Can any one of you disagree to this?

"No, no–one can", answered the scholars. Al-Ma'munsaid, "This is a unanimous thing. However, we need something more evident about the Prophet's family ('a) excerpted from the Qur'an."

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1. *Surat Al-Ahqaf, 46:8.*
2. *Surat Al-Shura, 42:25.*
3. *Surat Ahzab, 33:56.*

Imam al-Rida (‘a) said:

God says:

﴿يسٓ ۝١ وَٱلۡقُرۡءَانِ ٱلۡحَكِيمِ ۝٢ إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ ٱلۡمُرۡسَلِينَ ۝٣ عَلَىٰ صِرَٰطٖ مُّسۡتَقِيمٖ ۝٤﴾

“Yasin, by the Qur’an, the book of wisdom, you are a messenger and you follow the right path.”[1]

Who is that Yasin?

“Undoubtedly”, said the scholars, “Yasin is Muhammad (s).”

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) commented:

God has given to Muhammad (s) and his family (‘a) a characteristic that, except the heedful, no one can understand. In the Qur’an, God blesses no one save the prophets (‘a). He, the Exalted, says:

﴿سَلَٰمٌ عَلَىٰ نُوحٖ فِي ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ﴾

“Peace be with Noah among all men in the world.”[2]

﴿سَلَٰمٌ عَلَىٰٓ إِبۡرَٰهِيمَ﴾

“Peace be with Abraham.”[3]

﴿سَلَٰمٌ عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَٰرُونَ﴾

“Peace be with Moses and Aaron.”[4]

God, thus, does not bless the family of Noah, Abraham, or Moses. But He blesses Muhammed’s family (‘a) in His saying:

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1. *Surat Yasin, 36:1-4.*
2. *SuratAl-Saffat, 37:79.*
3. *SuratAl-Saffat, 37:109.*
4. *Surat Al-Saffat, 37:120.*

﴿سَلَـٰمٌ عَلَىٰٓ إِلۡ يَاسِينَ﴾

"Peace be with the family of Yasin."[1]

Yasin is Muhammad (s).

Al-Ma'mun expressed, "I knew already that only the core of the prophecy can explain this clearly."

Imam Al-Rida ('a) went on:

The eighth selected verse is God's saying:

﴿ وَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّمَا غَنِمۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَأَنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُۥ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي ٱلۡقُرۡبَىٰ ﴾

"Know that whatever property you may gain, one fifth belongs to God, the messenger, the kindred, orphans, the needy and those who need money while on a journey."[2]

In the previous verse, God adds the share of the Prophet's family ('a) to his share as well as the share of His messenger (s). This is the distinction between the Prophet's family ('a) and the umma whom God has situated in a place and situated the Prophet's family ('a) in another higher place. Besides, Almighty God chooses for the Prophet's family ('a) what He chooses for Himself as He selected them. He begins by mentioning Himself, His messenger (s), and then the kindred ('a). This is operative not only in the distribution of the spoils of war, but also in everything that God accepts for Himself and for them.

God says:

﴿لَّا يَأۡتِيهِ ٱلۡبَٰطِلُ مِنۢ بَيۡنِ يَدَيۡهِ وَلَا مِنۡ خَلۡفِهِۦۖ تَنزِيلٞ مِّنۡ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٖ﴾

"Falsehood cannot approach it, from before it nor from behind it, a

1. *Surat Al-Saffat, 37:130.*
2. *Surat Al-Anfal, 8:41.*

[gradually] sent down [revelation] from one all-wise, all-laudable."[1]

This holy saying is an affirmative declaration and an everlasting commandment for them in the book of God that, "Falsehood cannot reach it from any direction. It is the revelation from the All–wise, Praiseworthy One."

Regarding God's reference to the orphans and the needy, it is natural that the share of the orphan should be stopped when the feature of an orphanage ceases to exist. The same thing can be said about the share of the needy. While, on the other hand, the share of the Prophet's kindred ('a), whether they are needy or not, is incessant up to the day of resurrection, because no one is wealthier than God or the Prophet (s); however, their shares are incessant. God the Majestic has decided for the Prophet's family ('a) anything that He decides for Himself and His messenger. As He decides for Himself and His messenger (s) a share in the spoils of war, He decides on a share for the Prophet's family ('a). He begins with Himself, His messenger (s), and then His messenger's family ('a).

The same thing can be said about the commandment of obedience. God the Exalted says:

﴿يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ﴾

"Believers, obey God, His messenger (s), and your (qualified) leaders."[2]

In the previous verse, God begins with Himself, His messenger (s), and then His messenger's family ('a). The same thing occurs in the verse of Wilaya. God says:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ﴾

"Only God, His messenger (s), and the true believers who are steadfast in prayer and pay alms while they kneel during prayer, are

1. *Surat Fussilat, 41:42.*
2. *Surat An-Nisa', 4:59.*

your guardians –leaders."[1]

In the previous verse, God makes the leadership of the Prophet's family ('a) and obedience to the Prophet (s) connected to obedience to Him. Likewise, He makes His share as well as His messenger's (s) share of spoils of war connected to the shares of the Prophet's family ('a). All praise is due to Allah who has given the Prophet's family ('a) the greatest grace.

As God refers to the classes to whom alms should be given, He deems Himself, His messenger (s), and the Prophet's family ('a) far above them. He the Exalted says:

﴿إِنَّمَا ٱلصَّدَقَٰتُ لِلۡفُقَرَآءِ وَٱلۡمَسَٰكِينِ وَٱلۡعَٰمِلِينَ عَلَيۡهَا وَٱلۡمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمۡ وَفِي ٱلرِّقَابِ وَٱلۡغَٰرِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱبۡنِ ٱلسَّبِيلِۖ فَرِيضَةٗ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ﴾

"Alms are only for the poor, the destitute, the tax collectors, those whose hearts are inclined towards Islam, the slaves, those who cannot pay their debts, for the cause, God has decreed. God is All–knowing and All–wise."[2]

You cannot find any indication to God, His messenger (s), and the Prophet's family ('a) with the above–mentioned classes. This is because God has deemed Himself, His messenger (s), and the messenger's family ('a) far above receiving alms. Moreover, He has deemed unlawful for Muhammad (s) and his family ('a) to receive any alms, because alms are only the dirt of people, and it is unlawful for the Prophet (s) and his family ('a) to enjoy the dirt of people because they are purified against any dirt or filth. In fact, because God has purified and selected the Prophet's family ('a) exclusively, He accepts for them only what He accepts for Himself and dislikes for them only what He dislikes for Himself.

The ninth verse of selection is God's saying:

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1. *Surat Al-Ma'ida, 5:55.*
2. *Surat Al-Tawba, 9:60.*

﴿ فَسْـَٔلُوٓاْ أَهۡلَ ٱلذِّكۡرِ إِن كُنتُمۡ لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ ﴾

"Ask the people of the reminder if you do not know."[1]

We –the Prophet's family ('a)– are the people of the reminder.

"In this verse", spoke the scholars, "God refers to the Christians and the Jews."

Imam Al-Rida ('a) answered:

How is this acceptable? If it so, then God is asking us to follow their religion, and they can claim that their religion is better than Islam!

"O Abul–Hassan", said Al-Ma'mun, "Do you have an explanation opposing the scholars'?"

Imam Al-Rida ('a) spoke: The reminder in the Verse is God's messenger (s). We are his people. This is clear in the book of God. See God's saying in Sura of At–Talaq:

﴿ فَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ يَٰٓأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْۚ قَدۡ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيۡكُمۡ ذِكۡرٗا ۝١٠ رَّسُولٗا يَتۡلُواْ عَلَيۡكُمۡ ءَايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَٰتٖ ﴾

"People of understanding and believers, have fear of God. God has certainly sent you a reminder, messenger who recites to you the illustrious revelations of God."[2]

Thus, the reminder is God's messenger (s) and we are his people.

The tenth selected verse is God's saying:

﴿ حُرِّمَتۡ عَلَيۡكُمۡ أُمَّهَٰتُكُمۡ وَبَنَاتُكُمۡ وَأَخَوَٰتُكُمۡ ﴾

"You are forbidden to marry your mothers, daughters, sisters, paternal aunts, maternal aunts, nieces, your foster–mothers, your foster–sisters, your mothers–in–law, your step–daughters whom you

1. *Surat Al-Nahl, 16:43.*
2. *Surat Al-Talaq, 65:10-11.*

have brought up and with whose mothers you have had carnal relations, it would not be a sin to marry her if you did not have carnal relations with her mother. You are forbidden to marry the wives of your own sons and to marry two sisters at the same time without any adverse affect to such relations of the past. God is All–forgiving and All–merciful."[1]

Supposing the Prophet (s) is alive, is it licit for him to marry my daughter, my granddaughter, or my offspring?

"No", they answered, "It is unlawful."

Imam Al-Rida ('a) continued:

Is it licit for him to marry the daughter of any of you?"

"Yes", answered they, "It is lawful."

The Imam ('a), then, said:

This is sufficiently clear evidence that I am one of the Prophet's family members ('a) while you are not.

If you are the Prophet's family ('a), then it is unlawful for him to marry your daughters. It is unlawful for him to marry my daughter because I am one of his family members while you are members of his umma. This is another distinction between the Prophet's family ('a) and the umma. The Prophet's family ('a) is a part of him while the umma members are not unless they are his family.

The eleventh selected verse is God's saying:

﴿وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ ءَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَـٰنَهُۥٓ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلاً أَن يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ ٱللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَآءَكُم بِٱلْبَيِّنَـٰتِ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ﴾

"A believer from the people of the Pharaoh who concealed his faith said, "Would you kill a man just because he says God is my lord? He has brought you illustrious miracles from your lord. If he speaks lies, it will only harm him, but if he speaks the truth, some of his warnings

1. *Surat Al-Nisa', 4:23.*

may affect you. God does not guide a transgressing liar."[1]

That man was the maternal cousin of the Pharaoh; therefore, God relates him to the Pharaoh due to this relation, not religion. The same thing can be said about us. We are the Prophet's (s) because we are his family, particularly, and followers of his religion, generally. This is another distinction between the Prophet's family ('a) and the umma.

The twelfth selected verse is God's saying:

﴿وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَوٰةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا﴾

"Instruct your family to pray and be steadfast in worship."[2]

In this verse, God joins us with the Prophet (s) in the same commandment. This is a distinction over the umma. After the revelation of this verse, the Prophet (s) used to come near to the door of the house of Ali and Fatimah ('a) five times a day for nine months. He would shout: "The prayer! God's mercy be upon you."

God has not bestowed upon any of the prophets' progenies with such an honoured virtue that He has given exclusively to us. This is another distinction between the Prophet's family ('a) and the umma.

All praise is due to Allah, the lord of the world.

All peace be with Muhammed, (s) the Prophet of God.[3]

6. The Imam ('a) debates with Al-Ma'mun

Abi Salt al-Harawi said, "One day Al-Ma'mun told Al-Rida ('a), 'O Abal Hassan Al-Rida ('a)! Tell me, why is it that your grandfather Ali – the Commander of the Faithful ('a) became the one to divide up paradise and hell? What is meant by this? I have thought a lot about this." Then Al-Rida ('a) told him, "O Commander of the Faithful (i.e. Al-Ma'mun)! Has it not been narrated by your father, on the authority of your forefathers, on the authority of Abdullah ibn Abbas to have

1. *Surat Ghafir –Al-Mu'min, 40:28.*
2. *Surat Taha, 20: 132.*
3. **Tuhaf al-'Uqul**, p. 313.

said that he had heard God's Prophet (s) say, "Liking Ali is the same as faith, and despising him is the same as atheism." Al-Ma'mun said, "Yes." Then Al-Rida ('a) added, "Therefore, he is the one who divides up paradise and hell as it is loving him which equals faith, and despising him which equals atheism." Then Al-Ma'mun said, "O Abal Hassan (Al-Rida)! May God not let me live after you! I testify that you are the inheritor of the knowledge of God's Prophet (s)." Abi Salt (al-Harawi) added, "When Al-Rida ('a) returned home, I went to see him ('a) and said, "O son of God's Prophet (s)! How well you responded to the Commander of the Faithful's (Al-Ma'mun) question!" Al-Rida ('a) said, "O Aba Salt! I answered him in the same way that he was reasoning. I heard my father ('a) narrate on the authority of his forefathers ('a), on the authority of Ali ('a) that God's Prophet (s) told him, "O Ali! You are the one to divide up paradise and fire on the day of resurrection. You will order the fire to release some saying that they are yours, and tell the fire that some are for the fire to capture and they belong to it.'"

7. The Imam Debates with Islamic theologians

Hassan ibn Al-Jahm narrated: "One day I attended a meeting with Al-Ma'mun and Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida ('a) was also present. The theologians and rhetoricians from various sects had gathered there. One of them asked the Imam ('a), "O son of the Prophet of God ('a)! What is the proof of divine leadership which proves the validity of one who claims it?"

The Imam ('a) replied, "Divine Leadership of one who claims it is proved by what has been written and by the proofs."

The man asked, "What is the proof of a divine leader?" The Imam ('a) replied, "It is knowledge and the fulfilment of our prayers."

The man asked, "How can you tell what is going to happen in the future?" The Imam ('a) replied, "It is due to the trusted covenant which we have inherited from God's Prophet (s)."

The man asked, "How do you become aware of the people's secret intentions?" The Imam ('a) asked, "Have you not been told about the saying of the Messenger (s): 'Fear the insight of the believer since he looks through a God–given light.'?" The man replied, "Yes." The

Imam (‘a) said, “All believers have insight with which they look through a God–given light according to the degree of their faith, insight and knowledge. God has given us – the divine leaders – as much insight as He has bestowed upon all the believers. And in His mighty book, the Honourable the Exalted God says, ‘Behold! In this are signs for those who by tokens do understand.’ And the first of ‘those who by tokens do understand’ was God’s Prophet (s). Then the next one after him (‘a) was Ali – the Commander of the Faithful (‘a). The succeeding ones were Al-Hassan (‘a), Al-Hussein (‘a) and the rest of the divine leaders from the progeny of Al-Hussein (‘a) up until the day of resurrection. “Al-Hassan ibn Al-Jahm added, “Then Al-Ma’munlooked at Al-Rida (‘a) and said, ‘O Abal Hassan (Al-Rida-as-)! Tell us more about what God has granted to you – the members of the holy household (‘a).”

Then Al-Rida (‘a) said, “In fact, the Honourable the Exalted God has assisted us with a sanctified and purified spirit from Himself which is not an angel and with whom He has assisted no one in the past. That spirit is with the divine leaders (‘a) assisting them and making them succeed. It is a pillar of light between us and the Honourable, the Exalted God.”

Al-Ma’mun told him (‘a), “O Abal Hassan (Al-Rida-as-)! I have been told that there are some people who boast about you and transgress beyond bounds.” Al-Rida (‘a) said, “My father, Musa ibn Ja’far (‘a), narrated that his father (‘a) quoted on the authority of his father Muhammad ibn Ali (‘a), on the authority of his father Ali ibn Al-Hussein (‘a), on the authority of his father Al-Hussein ibn Ali (‘a), on the authority of his father Ali ibn Abi Talib (‘a) that God’s Prophet (s) said, “Do not raise me up to a position higher than I deserve. In fact, firstly the blessed, the sublime God first made me a servant (i.e. a person) before making me a prophet (‘a). And the Holy, Sublime God says:

﴿مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَن يُؤْتِيَهُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحُكْمَ وَٱلنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُواْ عِبَادًا لِّي مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَٰكِن كُونُواْ رَبَّٰنِيِّـۧنَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَبِمَا كُنتُمْ

تَدۡرُسُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَا يَأۡمُرَكُمۡ أَن تَتَّخِذُواْ ٱلۡمَلَٰٓئِكَةَ وَٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ أَرۡبَابًاۚ أَيَأۡمُرُكُم بِٱلۡكُفۡرِ بَعۡدَ إِذۡ أَنتُم مُّسۡلِمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾﴾

"It is not (possible) that a man, to whom is given the book, and wisdom, and the prophetic office should say to people: 'Be my worshippers rather than Allah's': on the contrary he would say: 'Be you worshippers of Him who is truly the cherisher of all: For you have taught the book and you have studied it earnestly. Nor would he instruct you to take angels and prophets for lords and patrons. What! Would he bid you to unbelief after you have bowed your will (to Allah in Islam)?"[1]

Ali ('a) said: "Two groups of people have ruined themselves because of me and I am not to blame for that: those who love me to the extreme, and those who hate me to the extreme. I take refuge in the Holy, Sublime God from those who boast about us and raise us up too high above our own true rank, just as Jesus ('a)– the son of the blessed Mary ('a) took refuge in God from the Christians". The Sublime God says, 'And behold! Allah will say:

﴿وَإِذۡ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ يَٰعِيسَى ٱبۡنَ مَرۡيَمَ ءَأَنتَ قُلۡتَ لِلنَّاسِ ٱتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّيَ إِلَٰهَيۡنِ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِۖ قَالَ سُبۡحَٰنَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِيٓ أَنۡ أَقُولَ مَا لَيۡسَ لِي بِحَقٍّۚ إِن كُنتُ قُلۡتُهُۥ فَقَدۡ عَلِمۡتَهُۥۚ تَعۡلَمُ مَا فِي نَفۡسِي وَلَآ أَعۡلَمُ مَا فِي نَفۡسِكَۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ عَلَّٰمُ ٱلۡغُيُوبِ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَا قُلۡتُ لَهُمۡ إِلَّا مَآ أَمَرۡتَنِي بِهِۦٓ أَنِ ٱعۡبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمۡۚ وَكُنتُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ شَهِيدٗا مَّا دُمۡتُ فِيهِمۡۖ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيۡتَنِي كُنتَ أَنتَ ٱلرَّقِيبَ عَلَيۡهِمۡۚ وَأَنتَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ شَهِيدٌ ﴿١١٧﴾﴾

"O Jesus son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of Allah?' Jesus ('a) will say, 'Glory be to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right to say. Had I said such

1. *Surat Al-Imran, 3:79-80.*

a thing, thou would indeed have known it. Thou knowest what is in my heart, though I know not what is in Thine. For Thou knowest in full all that is hidden. Never said I to them aught except what Thou didstcommand me to say, 'worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord'; and I was a witness over them whilst I dwelt amongst them; when Thou didst take me up Thou wast the watcher over them, and Thou art a witness to all things."[1]

The honourable, the exalted God also says:

﴿لَّن يَسْتَنكِفَ ٱلْمَسِيحُ أَن يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِّلَّهِ وَلَا ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ ٱلْمُقَرَّبُونَ﴾

"Christ disdaineth not to serve and worship God, nor do the angels, those nearest"[2](to God): those who disdain His worship and are arrogant; He will gather them all together unto Himself to answer. And the honourable, the exalted God says:

﴿مَّا ٱلْمَسِيحُ ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهِ ٱلرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُۥ صِدِّيقَةٌ ۖ كَانَا يَأْكُلَانِ ٱلطَّعَامَ﴾

"Christ ('a) the son of Mary ('a) was no more than an apostle; many were the apostles that passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They both had to eat their (daily) food."[3]

This means that they had to defecate.

Therefore, we despise whoever considers divinity for the prophets or the divine leaders, or considers that prophethood belongs to the divine leaders, or considers people other than the divine leaders to be divine leaders. We despise him in this world and in the hereafter. Then Al-Ma'mun asked, "O Abal Hassan (Al-Rida-as-)! What do you think about the return (of Jesus -as-)."

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1. *Surat Al-Maedah, 5:116-117.*
2. *SuratAl-Nisa, 4:172.*
3. *SuratAl-Maedah, 5:75.*

Then Al-Rida (‘a) said, “Whenever Al-Mahdi (‘a) rises up from my progeny, Jesus (‘a)– the son of the Blessed Mary (‘a) will descend and pray behind him.”

The Imam (‘a) added, “Islam started out being a stranger and it will return to that state. Blessed be the strangers.”

Al-Ma’mun asked, “O son of God’s Prophet (‘a)! What will happen next?” The Imam (‘a) said, “The right will be returned to its true possessor.” Al-Ma’mun asked, “O Abal Hassan (Al-Rida-as-)! What is your viewpoint about those who believe in transmigration?” Al-Rida (‘a) said, “Whoever believes in transmigration has indeed disbelieved in the exalted God and denied heaven and hell.” Al-Ma’mun questioned, “What do you say about those who were perverted?” Al-Rida (‘a) said, “They were a tribe whom God became angry with and perverted. Then they lived for three more days and died. They did not have any babies during that time. However, what you can see in the world of monkeys, pigs and similar animals are those animals who were named after the perverted ones. They are similar to those animals whom we are not allowed to eat or use otherwise.” Al-Ma’mun said, “O Abal Hassan(Al-Rida-as-)! May God not let me outlive you! I swear by God that correct knowledge cannot be found except with you members of the holy household. You have inherited all the knowledge of your forefathers. May God reward you well for Islam and its people.”

Al-Hassan ibn Al-Jahm said, “When Al-Rida (‘a) stood up, I followed him. He (‘a) went home and I went to see him and told him, “O son of the Prophet of God (‘a)! Praise be to God who directed the positive attention of the Commander of the Faithful (Al-Ma’mun) towards you to the extent that he honours you.”The Imam (‘a) said, “O Ibn Al-Jahm! Do not be deceived by seeing him honour me and listening to me. Soon he will kill me with poison. He will oppress me. I know this through the trusted covenant which has been passed down to me from God’s Prophet (s) by my forefathers (‘a). However, keep this a secret for as long as I am alive.”

Al-Hassan ibn Al-Jahm said, “I did not tell this to anyone until Abal Hassan Al-Rida (‘a) was murdered in Toos with poison. He (‘a) was buried in the house of Hameed ibn Qahtaba al-Ta’ee in the same

shrine in which Harun Ar–Rashid was buried, and was buried next to Harun Ar–Rashid.

8. Imam Debates with Yahyah ibn Zahhak Samarqandi

Al-Ma'mun wished in his heart that Al-Rida ('a) would fail in the arguments and be overcome by opposing sides. However, Al-Ma'mun acted differently on the surface. Then Al-Ma'mun gathered together the jurisprudents and the masters of eloquent speech, and privately told them to argue with the Imam ('a) on the subject of divine leadership. Then Al-Rida ('a) told them, 'Please choose one person from among yourselves to argue with me on your behalf. Then whatever becomes imperative for him is going to be imperative for all of you.' Then they chose a man known as Yahya ibn adh–Dhahhak al-Samarqandi for whom there was no man in Khurasan(in Persia) to challenge. Then Al-Rida ('a) told him, 'O Yahya! Ask me about anything you wish.' Yahya said, 'I will ask about divine leadership. How do you claim one to be a divine leader who did not lead the people (perhaps he was referring to Imam Ali -as-), and abandon one who has led the people and the people are content with his divine leadership?' Al-Rida ('a) told him, 'O Yahya! Tell me, which of the following two people are right: One who acknowledges a person who denounces himself, and one who acknowledges a person who considers himself to be honest! Which of the two are right, and which one is wrong?' Then Yahya remained silent. Al-Ma'muntold him, 'Answer him.' Yahya said, 'O commander of the faithful (i.e. Al-Ma'mun)! Please excuse me from answering.' Al-Ma'mun said, 'O Abal Hassan (Al-Rida-as-)! We understand your intentions behind asking this question.' Then the Imam ('a) said, 'Now Yahya must inform us about which of his leaders have denounced themselves and which ones have acknowledged themselves. If he thinks that they have denounced themselves, then they do not deserve to be divine leaders. And if hethinks that they have acknowledged themselves, then the first one said, 'I have attained mastery over you but I am not the best of you.' And the one who comes next will say, 'It was a mistake to pledge allegiance to the first one. Kill anyone who does this again.' Then, by God, he was not pleased with anything but killing those who repeated that. Then when someone is not the best of the people – given that to be the best is only possible by having such characteristics as knowledge, struggling in the way of God, and

possessing other nobilities – none of which he possessed; then how can the pledge of allegiance to someone be proper if the pledge of allegiance to one has made such a mistake which deserves that anyone doing such an act (pledge of allegiance) be killed. How can his leadership be acceptable for others while he is as such? Then he himself said the following on the pulpit, 'Indeed there is Satan within me who may overcome me. Please direct me to the straight path whenever he makes me go astray. And please advise me whenever I make a mistake.' Therefore, they themselves declare that they are not divine leaders whether they are telling the truth or lying.' Then Yahya had no answer to give. Then Al-Ma'mun was surprised about what the Imam ('a) had said and said, 'O Abal Hassan Al-Rida ('a)! There exists no one else but you on earth who can speak so eloquently.[1]

9. The Imam ('a) debates with Sulaiman al-Marwazi

As for Sulaiman al-Marwazi, he was skilled in theology and experienced in theological debates. He was the most prominent religious scholar in Khurasan. Al-Ma'mun invited him, met him with a friendly reception and honour, and said to him: "My cousin, Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida ('a), has come to me from al-Hijaz. He likes theology and theologians. Will you come to us on the 8th day of Thu al-Hijja (yawm al-Tarwiya) in order to debate with him?"

Sulaiman felt embarrassed. He thought that the Imam ('a) would be unable to answer his questions and that the 'Alawides would harbour malice against him. Accordingly, he apologized to Al-Ma'mun, saying: "I do not wish to question him in your session and among a group of the Hashimites. The people will regard him as defective when he debates with me on theology. Defects are not liked, nor permissible to him."

Al-Ma'mun made covenant with him and promised that no harm or detested things would befall him. He said (to him): "I have invited you because I know that you are an adroit expert in theology. I have no intention except that you silence him (Imam Al-Rida-as-)–at least in one argument."

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1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a)**, 2:255-256; **Ihtijaj**, 2:234-235.

This statement demonstrates that Al-Ma'mun had evil intentions toward the Imam ('a), harboured malice against him and fully hated him. Sulaiman felt safe from any aggression against him, and then he said to Al-Ma'mun: "I will be sufficient, commander of the faithful, bring us together and do not dispraise me." Meanwhile Al-Ma'mun sent his messenger to the Imam ('a) and asked him to come in order to debate with Sulaiman. The Imam ('a) responded to that and decided to attend along with a delegation from among his eminent companions including 'Imran al-Sabi'i, who had become a Muslim at his hands. Then –before the arrival of the Imam ('a)– a debate took place between Sulaiman and 'Imran al-Sabi'i on (al-bida'), i.e. the divine changing of decisions and/or decrees. Sulaiman denied al-bida', while 'Imran confirmed it. Then the Imam ('a) arrived, when Sulaiman sought the Imam's ('a) view on it and he confessed it. He then questioned Sulaiman as to why would he deny it, knowing that the Almighty God has stated many verses in the Qura'n which proves the belief in al-bida' is correct, such as:

﴿أَوَلَا يَذْكُرُ ٱلْإِنسَـٰنُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَـٰهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْـًٔا﴾

"Does not man remember that We created him before, when he was nothing?"[1]

And when He states:

﴿وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِى يَبْدَؤُا۟ ٱلْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُۥ﴾

"And He is Who originates the creation, then reproduces it."[2]

And He says:

﴿بَدِيعُ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ﴾

"Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth."[3]

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1. *Surat Mariam, 19:67.*
2. *Surat Al-Room, 30:27.*
3. *Surat Al-Baqarah, 2:117.*

And He says:

﴿ يَزِيدُ فِي ٱلۡخَلۡقِ مَا يَشَآءُ ﴾

"All praise is due to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, the Maker of the angels, messengers flying on wings, two, and three, and four; He increases in creation what He pleases."[1]

And He says:

﴿خَلَقَهُۥۖ وَبَدَأَ خَلۡقَ ٱلۡإِنسَٰنِ مِن طِينٍ ﴾

"And He began the creation of man from dust."[2]

Then He states:

﴿وَءَاخَرُونَ مُرۡجَوۡنَ لأَمۡرِ ٱللَّهِ إِمَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمۡ وَإِمَّا يَتُوبُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ ﴾

"And others are made to await Allah's command, whether He chastises them or whether He turn to them (mercifully)."[3]

Also when He says:

﴿وَمَا يُعَمَّرُ مِن مُّعَمَّرٍ وَلَا يُنقَصُ مِنۡ عُمُرِهِۦٓ إِلَّا فِي كِتَٰبٍ﴾

"And no one whose life is lengthened has his life lengthened, noris aught diminished of one's life, but it is all in a book."[4]

So can't one get the belief in al-bida'established through these verses from the Holy Qur'an?

Sulaiman replied: Do you narrate anything from your fathers concerning the interpretation of these verses?

The Imam ('a) said: 'Yes, indeed, as from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) it

1. *Surat Fatir, 35:1.*
2. *Surat Al-Sajda, 32:7.*
3. *Surat Al-Tawbah, 9:106.*
4. *Surat Fatir, 35:11.*

has been narrated that he say: The Almighty Allah (swt) has two stages of knowledge, one at an elevated level, that no one but Him knows about it, –as any form of al-bida originates from this level, and another level of knowledge that has been taught and/or revealed to His Angels and prophets. Thus those knowledgeable scholars of Ahlul Bayt (‘a) know about it! Sulaiman said: I want you to ascribe it to the Qur’anic verses, Will you?

The Imam (‘a) said: ‘That’s when the divine Prophet (s) is addressed by the Almighty, who reveals to him:

﴿فَتَوَلَّ عَنۡهُمۡ فَمَآ أَنتَ بِمَلُومٖ﴾

“Then turn your back upon them for you are not to blame.”[1]

That’s when He had first intended to destroy them and they would then perish, to which we narrate that the Almighty God (‘a) says:

﴿وَذَكِّرۡ فَإِنَّ ٱلذِّكۡرَىٰ تَنفَعُ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ﴾

“And continue to remind, for surely the reminder profits the believers!”[2]

Sulaiman said to the Imam (‘a): Please add more to my knowledge!

The Imam (‘a) said: I have heard my father, who has narrated from his grandfathers from the holy Prophet (s) that he has said: Almighty Allah (swt) once revealed to one of his prophets (‘a) to inform a king, who was alive at that time, that he would die on a specific date and time. Then he did so, however the king had a deep supplication with the Lord, during a long night, so long as he did not sleep for the night over his bed. He whispered to the Lord the following: ‘O Lord, please prolong my life, so that I’d be able to see my son grown up, and I’d accomplish what I should do’. Almighty God (swt) revealed to the same prophet (‘a) to go and inform the king that his life has been prolonged, as it has been extended for fifteen years. The prophet (‘a)

1. *Surat Al-Thariat, 51:54.*
2. *SuratAl-Thariat 51:55.*

asked God (swt): 'O Lord, You know that I have never lied! So how would he react upon hearing this news from me again? Almighty God (swt) revealed to him: You should deliver the message, as you are solely a commanded servant, and there is no one who has the right to question the Almighty Allah's (swt) acts!

Then Imam Al-Rida ('a) directly addressed Sulaiman asking: Don't you know that when you believe that (denying al-bida'), you would be like the Jews?

Sulaiman said: I seek refuge to Almighty Allah (swt), how come?

Imam Al-Rida ('a) said: 'The Jews say:

﴿يَدُ ٱللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ﴾

"Allah's hand is fettered."[1]

As they meant that the Almighty God (swt) cannot change, nor come with anything new after deciding it! Almighty God (swt) replied to them:

﴿غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُواْ بِمَا قَالُواْ﴾

"Their hands are fettered and they are accursed for saying so."[2]

I have heard my father replying to a group of people who had approached him about al-bida' and said: Why would people deny al-bida', while it is known about the unclear destiny of people whose final status will be postponed during the day of judgement?

Sulaiman said: How would you then interpret the Qur'anic verse:

﴿إِنَّآ أَنزَلْنَـٰهُ فِى لَيْلَةِ ٱلْقَدْرِ﴾

"Lo! We revealed it on the Night of Predestination?"[3]

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1. *Surat Al-Maedah, 5:64.*
2. *Surat Al-Maedah, 5:64.*
3. *Surat Al-Qadr, 97:1.*

What is it referring to?

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said: O Sulaiman, during that night Almighty Allah (swt) will decide whatever is going to happen to everybody and everything –whether good or evil, life or death, so whatever anyone would receive as decided during the night of predestination, is declared as the final decree.

Sulaiman said: Now, I realize that. Will you please add more to my knowledge!

Imam Al-Rida (‘a) said: O Sulaiman, there are things that are solely known to the Almighty Allah (swt) who will decide as to what is to happen, or what should be postponed. O Sulaiman, Ali (‘a) used to say: There are two levels of the divine knowledge, First level that which He reveals to His angels and His messengers, thus it shall be, as He never tells untrue information, nor does misinform His angels and His messengers. The second is what He reserves to His own, from which he decides what should be happening and what is to be postponed, or what to be and what should not happen.[1]

Sulaiman said to Al-Ma’mun: I will never deny al-bida’ from today on Inshallah.

Then Al-Ma’mun turned to Sulaiman and said to him:

“Question Abu` al-Hassan about whatever you desire. You must listen well and be fair.”

Sulaiman asked the Imam (‘a): Can I ask you? The Imam (‘a) replied: You may ask about whatsoever you wish! Then Sulaiman asked the following questions:

Q1: “What is your view about him whom has made the Divine will as a name and an attribute such as All–living, All–hearing, All–seeing, and All–powerful?”

Ans.1: “Don’t you say that things were originated and became different because He desired and willed, and you do not want to say that things were originated and became different because He is All–

1. Tawhid al-Saduq, manuscript T, part (he has revealed it to no one).

hearing and All–seeing? This is proof that they are not similar to All–hearing, All–seeing, and All–powerful."

Sulaiman interrupted the Imam ('a), saying: "Hasn't He always been willing?"

The Imam ('a) answered him: "Sulaiman, is His will other than Him?"

Sulaiman said: Yes!

Thus he had numbered (some attributes) to show that Allah, the Exalted, was united in His intention, as He has accepted that there were created things that were alongside His existence. So, the Imam ('a) disproved Sulaiman's vague error, saying:

"You have proved, along with Him, something other than Him which has always been."

"I have not approved (that)", replied Sulaiman.

"Is it (will) created?" asked the Imam.

"No, it is not created", answered Sulaiman.

The Imam ('a) perplexed Sulaiman and he began making contradictory statements. Sulaiman sometimes said that will was eternal and sometimes said that it was created. Therefore, Al-Ma'mun shouted at him and asked him not to show obstinacy and to show fairness in his speech, saying:

"You must be fair! Do you not see that the people of scientific debates and consideration are all around you?"

Then Al-Ma'mun turned to the Imam ('a) and said to him: "Abu` al-Hassan, please carry on to debate with him on theology, for he is the theologian of Khurasan."

The Imam ('a) asked him: "It is created, as whatever is not ever–existing and eternal must be created, and if it is not created, it should be eternal and ever existing!"

Sulaiman interrupted the Imam ('a) saying: "His (Allah's) will is just Him, exactly like His hearing, His sight, and His knowledge are all identical to Him."

The Imam ('a) denied his statement, asking: "Is His will Himself?"

"No", was the answer.

The Imam ('a) began confuting his statement, saying: "Therefore, the willing is not like the All–hearing and the All–seeing."

Sulaiman answered at random, for the Imam ('a) left no room for him to defend his own vague errors. Sulaiman said: 'Surely, He willed Himself just as He heard Himself, saw Himself, and recognized Himself."

The Imam ('a) confuted his statement, asking: "What is the meaning of that: He willed Himself? Did He will to be a thing? Did He will to be All–living, All–hearing, All–seeing, and All–powerful?"

Sulaiman did not know what to say, so he answered: "Yes."

"Did that occur through His will?" asked the Imam ('a). "No", was the answer.

The Imam ('a) began refuting Sulaiman's statement and showing the contradiction therein, saying: "Your statement: 'He willed to be All–living, All–hearing, and All–seeing, has no sense, as long as it was not through His will?"

As the matter was deep, Sulaiman said: "Yes, that was through His will."

The people in the session burst into laughter. Al-Ma'mun laughed at Sulaiman's contradictory speech. However, the Imam ('a) turned to the people and asked them to show gentleness toward Sulaiman. Then he asked him: "Sulaiman, do you think that He (i.e. Allah, the Exalted) has altered from state to state and changed due to it? This is something through which Allah is not described."

Sulaiman became feeble and kept silent, so the Imam ('a) turned to him in order to establish proof against him, saying: "Sulaiman, I want to ask you a question."

"Question (me), may I be your ransom", replied Sulaiman.

"Tell me about you and your companions: Do you debate with the people on theology according to what they understand and know or according to what they do not understand and know?"

"Rather, according to what they understand and know", answered

Sulaiman.

The Imam (‘a) began establishing proof against Sulaiman's vague errors, saying: “The thing which the people know is that the willing is other than will, that the willing is before will, that the doer is before the thing done. This (statement) disproves your statement: 'Will and the willing is one thing.'“

Sulaiman said: “May I be your ransom, isn't that of Him as the people do not know and understand?”

The Imam (‘a) continued refuting Sulaiman's vague errors, saying: “I think that you have claimed the knowledge of that without knowledge and said: 'Will is like hearing and seeing.' If you have such a view, then it is something which is neither known nor is understood.”

Sulaiman became perplexed and was unable to answer because of the many scientific abilities of the Imam (‘a). The Imam (‘a) resumed his debate in order to complete proof against him, saying:

“Sulaiman, does Allah know all those who are in the Heaven and the Hell–fire?”

“Yes”, Sulaiman replied.

The Imam (‘a) opposed him, saying: “Is what Allah, the Exalted, knows (part) of that? Can it be less than that, or more?”

“Yes, but it could be more” was the answer.

“If it is to the extent that nothing of it remains but is, will He increase them or cut them off from it (the fruit of the garden)?”

“Rather, He increases them”, replied Sulaiman.

The Imam (‘a) disproved his statement, saying: “From your statement I see that He increases them which is not in His knowledge that it will be?”

Sulaiman said: “May I be your ransom, the willing has no limit.”

The Imam (‘a) continued disproving Sulaiman's vague errors, saying: “In your view is that His knowledge does not encompass what is therein (in the Garden) if He does not know the limit of that which is in the garden. If His knowledge does not encompass what is therein, He does not know what is therein before it is. Allah, the Great and

Almighty, is High above that!"

Sulaiman began apologizing and correcting himself, saying: "Verily, I said that He did not know that, for it has no limit, and Allah, the Great and Almighty, described them (the people of the garden) with everlastingness, and we hated to make cessation, nor limitation for them."

The Imam ('a) went on refuting his vague errors and his descriptions, saying: "His knowledge of that does not bring about His cutting them from it, for He may know that; then He increases them; then He does not cut them off from it. This is what Allah, the Great and Almighty, has said in his book:

﴿كُلَّمَا نَضِجَتْ جُلُودُهُم بَدَّلْنَـٰهُمْ جُلُودًا غَيْرَهَا لِيَذُوقُوا۟ ٱلْعَذَابَ﴾

"So often as their skins are thoroughly burned, we will change them for other skins, that they may feel the chastisement."[1]

And He said to the people of the garden:

﴿عَطَآءً غَيْرَ مَجْذُوذٍ﴾

"A gift which shall never be cut off."[2]

And He, the Great and Almighty, said:

﴿وَفَـٰكِهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ لَّا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ﴾

"And abundant fruit, neither intercepted nor forbidden."[3]

Therefore, He, the Great and Almighty, knows that, so He does not cut them off from increase. Have you seen that He renews what the people of the garden eat and drink?"

"Yes", was the answer.

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1. *Surat Al-Nisa', 4:56.*
2. *Surat Hud, 11:108.*
3. *Surat al-waqi'ah, 56:32-33.*

"Does He cut them (the people of the garden) off from it (fruit), while He puts (another) in the place of it?" asked the Imam ('a).

"No", was the answer.

The Imam ('a) continued establishing his beliefs, saying: "If He puts (another) in the place of it, then it (the fruit) is everlasting; therefore they are not cut off from it."

Sulaiman went on clinging to vague errors and imaginings which the Imam ('a) had already disproved through undeniable proofs, saying:

"Yes, He cuts them off from it and does not increase them."

The Imam ('a) opposed that and confuted it with these words: "Therefore, He destroys (them) therein. This (statement), Sulaiman, cancels everlastingness and opposes the book, for Allah, the Great and Almighty, says:

﴿لَهُم مَّا يَشَآءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ﴾

"*They have therein whatever they wish and with us is more yet."*[1]

And He, the Great and Almighty, says:

﴿عَطَآءً غَيْرَ مَجْذُوذٍ﴾

"A gift which shall never be cut off."[2]

And He, the Great and Almighty, says:

﴿وَمَا هُم مِّنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ﴾

"Nor shall they be ever ejected from it (the Garden)."[3]

And He, the Great and Almighty, says:

1. *Surat Qaf, 50:35.*
2. *Surat Hud, 11:108.*
3. *Surat Al-Hijr, 15:48.*

﴿خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدًا﴾

"Abide therein forever."[1]

And He, the Great and Almighty, says:

﴿وَفَٰكِهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ ۝٣٢ لَّا مَقۡطُوعَةٖ وَلَا مَمۡنُوعَةٖ﴾

"And abundant fruit, neither intercepted nor forbidden."[2]

Sulaiman kept silent, not knowing what to answer after the Imam (‘a) had closed all avenues of argument. Then the Imam (‘a) asked him: "Sulaiman, tell me about will: Is it an action or not?"

"Rather, it is an action", replied Sulaiman.

"Therefore, it is created, for all actions are created", declared the Imam (‘a).

All possible beings are effects, made, and originated. As for the necessary being, the most High, it is impossible for Him to have the qualities of the possible being. Sulaiman was unable to say anything and began contradicting himself, saying:

"It (i.e. will) is not an action."

As for Sulaiman, he had already admitted that it was an action. As a result, the Imam (‘a) turned to him and asked him: "Is there anyone besides Him who is eternal too?"

Sulaiman evaded this and did not answer the Imam's (‘a) question, saying: "Will is the bringing forth."

The Imam (‘a) answered: "This is the thing because of which you criticized Dirar[1] and his companions, saying that everything Allah, the Great and Almighty, has created in heaven or earth, ocean or land such as dog or pig, monkey, human or an animal is Allah's will, and that Allah's will lives, dies, goes away, eats, drinks, marries, feels

1. *Surat Al-Nisa', 4:57; al-Ma'idah, 5:119.*
2. *SuratAl-Waqi'ah, 56:32-33.*

pleasure, wrongs, commits immoral acts, disbelieves, becomes a polytheist, so He renounces it and repeats Himself through it, and this is its boundary." The Imam (‘a) demonstrated Dirar's corrupt viewpoints which Sulaiman and his companions had criticized. He refuted all these refutable viewpoints before Sulaiman, but the latter did not understand the Imam's (‘a) statement and said: "It (i.e. will) is like hearing, seeing, and knowledge."

Sulaiman repeated what he had already said that will was like hearing and seeing. The Imam (‘a) had already confuted this corrupt statement, yet he (‘a), asked him: "Tell me: Are hearing, seeing, and knowledge created?"

"No", was the answer.

The Imam (‘a) criticized Sulaiman for his contradictory statement, saying: "How did you negate Him? You sometimes said that He did not will and sometimes you said that He willed, and that it (i.e. will) was not one of His actions."

Sulaiman said at random: "Surely, that is like our statement: He sometimes knows and sometimes does not know!"

The Imam (‘a) answered with inclusive proof, saying: "That is not the same, for negating the known is not like negating knowledge; while negating what is willed is identical to negating will, for if the thing is not willed, there will be no will. Knowledge may be established even if the known is not like seeing. Man may know something, even though that what is known cannot be seen (by others). Knowledge may be established even if it (the known) is non–existent."

Sulaiman answered: "It (i.e. will) is made."

The Imam (‘a) invalidated Sulaiman's statement, saying: "Therefore, it (will) is originated and is not like hearing and seeing, for hearing and seeing are not made, and this is made."

Sulaiman said: "It (will) is one of His eternal attributes."

The Imam (‘a) answered him, saying: "Therefore man must be eternal, for his quality is eternal." Sulaiman began to become evasive and said: "No, because He did not do it (will).'

As a result, the Imam (‘a) criticized him for that and said: "O

Khurasani, how numerous your errors are! Are things not according to His will?"

Sulaiman insisted on his error, saying: "No."

The Imam ('a) answered him: "If things are not according to His will nor His final decree nor His command nor His action, then how are they? High is Allah above that!"

Sulaiman became perplexed. He was unable to say anything. Then the Imam ('a) continued confuting Sulaiman's vague errors, asking him: "Will you not tell me about these words of Him, the Great and Almighty:

﴿وَإِذَآ أَرَدْنَآ أَن نُّهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُواْ فِيهَا﴾

"And when We wish to destroy a town, we send our commandment to the people of it who lead easy lives, but they transgress therein."[1]

Does He not mean by that that He creates His own will?

"Yes", Sulaiman retorted.

The Imam ('a) answered him: "If He creates His own will, then your statement is that His will is identical to Him, or a thing of His is quite futile, for it is not (possible) for Him to create Himself and He does not change His state. Exalted is Allah above that."

Sulaiman opposed himself again, saying: "By that He does not mean that He creates a will."

"So what does He mean?" asked the Imam ('a).

"He means doing a thing", was the answer.

The Imam ('a) rebuked him, saying: "Woe unto you! How many times have you repeated this matter? I told you that will is created, for the action of a thing is originated."

"Thus this verse has no sense", declared Sulaiman.

"Do you think that when He describes Himself with will, it has no

1. *Surat Al-Isra', 17:16.*

sense? If will is neither created, nor ever–existing, then your statement, 'Allah, the Great and Almighty, has always been willing' is groundless."

Sulaiman began clinging to vague errors, saying: "I mean that His will is one of Allah's eternal actions."

The Imam ('a) answered him, saying: "Do you not know that things, which are ever–existing and eternal, cannot be created, and it cannot be created and eternal at the same time?"

Sulaiman became perplexed after the Imam ('a) had disproved all his vague errors and made clear for him that every possible thing was created and not eternal, and that the will of Allah was not like the qualities of the possible being.

The Imam ('a) continued establishing his proofs against Sulaiman, saying: "There is no harm on you! Complete your questions!"

"Will is one of His attributes", declared Sulaiman.

The Imam ('a) criticized him for repeating this statement, saying: "How many times have you said that it is one of His attributes? Is His will created, or has it always been so?"

"Created", was the answer.

The Imam ('a) said: "Allahu Akbar! You are telling me that one of His attributes, which is His will, is created, even though it is an eternal and ever–existing attribute?

Sulaiman could not answer.

The Imam ('a) said: Whatever is an eternal and ever–existing cannot be created."

Sulaiman began contradicting himself, saying: "Things are not a will, and He did not will anything."

The Imam ('a) answered him, saying: "You have erred, O Sulaiman! He did and created, despite the fact that he did not want, nor willed the creation! This is the attribute of someone who does not know what he is doing. Exalted is Allah above all of that."

Again Sulaiman contradicted himself and said: "Master, I have already informed you that will is like hearing, seeing, and knowing."

As a result, Al-Ma'mun shouted at Sulaiman, saying: "Woe unto you, Sulaiman! How you have erred and how often you have repeated yourself? Stop it and turn to another matter, for you seem to be unable to provide any answer better than that."

The Imam ('a) turned to Al-Ma'mun and said to him: "Leave him, commander of the faithful. Do not interrupt his questions, for he will regard it as an argument (against me)."

Then the Imam ('a) looked at Sulaiman and said to him: "Speak, Sulaiman!"

Sulaiman continued: "I have already informed you that will is like hearing, seeing, and knowing."

The Imam ('a) replied: "There is no harm, tell me about the meaning of this. Is it one meaning or different meanings?"

"One meaning", came the answer.

"Is the meaning of different wills a unique one?" asked the Imam ('a).

"Yes", was the answer.

The Imam ('a) answered him with an irrefutable answer, saying: "If its meaning is one, then this means that the will of standing, sitting, life, and death are alone! If all His wills are one, then no parts of them can go ahead of other parts, and no parts of which can oppose other parts, as they are all one!"

Sulaiman replied, saying: "Surely, its meaning is different."

The Imam ('a) understood that Sulaiman was uncertain, so he asked him: "Tell me about the willing: Is He the will or other than it?"

"Rather, He is the will", replied Sulaiman.

The Imam ('a) answered him: "In your view, is the willing different when He is the will."

"Master, the will is not the willing", explained Sulaiman.

Yet the Imam ('a) understood that Sulaiman was not sure, so he said to him: "Thus one may conclude that will is created; otherwise there is (something) other than Him along with Him."

"Will is one of His names", said Sulaiman.

"Did He name Himself with that?" asked the Imam ('a).

"No", replied Sulaiman, "He did not name Himself with that."

"Therefore, have you any right to name Him with what He did not name Himself?" asked the Imam ('a).

Sulaiman evaded this and said: "He described Himself that He was willing."

The Imam ('a) said: "Describing Himself that he is willing does not mean that He is identical to will, nor does it mean that His will is one of His names."

"That is because His will is His knowledge", declared Sulaiman.

The Imam ('a) asked: "You ignorant, if He knows a thing, He does will it."

"Yes", was the answer.

"If He does not will a thing, does He not know it?" asked the Imam ('a).

"Yes", perplexed replied Sulaiman.

The Imam ('a) began explaining Sulaiman's corrupt views, saying: "Why did you say that? What is the evidence that His will is His knowledge? He may know what He does not will by no means, and those are the words of Him, the Great and Almighty:

﴿وَلَئِن شِئْنَا لَنَذْهَبَنَّ بِٱلَّذِىٓ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ﴾

"And if we will, we should certainly take away that which we haverevealed to you."[1]

Therefore, He knows how He takes it away, but He never takes it away."

Sulaiman said: "That is because He finished the affair, so He did not increase anything therein."

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1. *Surat Al-Irsa', 17:86.*

The Imam (‘a) replied, saying: “This is the statement of the Jews. So why did He, the Exalted, say:

﴿ٱدۡعُونِيٓ أَسۡتَجِبۡ لَكُمۡ﴾

“Call upon me, I will answer you.”[1]

As for Sulaiman, he denied that and said: “By that He meant that He had power over it.”

The Imam (‘a) asked him: “Does He promise what He does not fulfil? Why did He say:

﴿يَزِيدُ فِي ٱلۡخَلۡقِ مَا يَشَآءُ﴾

“He increases in creation what He wills?”[2]

And He, the Great and Almighty, said:

﴿يَمۡحُواْ ٱللَّهُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيُثۡبِتُۖ وَعِندَهُۥٓ أُمُّ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ﴾

“Allah makes to pass away and establishes what He wills, while He finished this matter.”[3]

Sulaiman became perplexed and was lost of words.

Then the Imam (‘a) continued confuting Sulaiman's nebulouserrors, saying: “Sulaiman, did He know that a human being would be and did He not will to create a human being by no means? That a human being will die today and He will not make him die today?”

“Yes”, retorted Sulaiman.

The Imam (‘a) hastened to refute these contradictory words of Sulaiman, asking: “Does He know that what He wills exists or does He know what He will not exist?” Sulaiman opposed the Imam, saying: “He knows that both of them exist.”

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1. *Surat Ghafir, 40:60.*
2. *Surat Fatir, 35:1.*
3. *Surat Al-Ra'd, 13:39.*

The Imam (‘a) answered him according to his contradictory statement, saying: “Therefore, He knows that man is living and dead, standing and sitting, blind and seeing at the same time. This is impossible.”

Sulaiman began saying more contradictory statements regarding the questions of the Imam (‘a), saying: “May I be your ransom, He knows that one of them exists.”

The Imam (‘a) said: “There is no harm (on you), which of them exists, the one which He wills to be or the one which He wills not to be?”

Sulaiman began saying at random, with contradictory statements:

“He wills what He wills to be!”

The people, including Al-Ma’mun, burst into laughter. As for Imam Al-Rida (‘a), he smiled at Sulaiman and said to him: “You have erred and left your statement: He knows that a person will die today and He does not will to make him die today, that He wills to create creatures and He wills not to create them. If your knowledge is not enough (to understand) what He wills not to be, then only He knows what He wills to be.”

Sulaiman tried to correct his statement, saying: “My statement is that will is neither He nor a thing other than Him!”

The Imam (‘a) indicated Sulaiman's contradiction, saying: “If you say that will is not He, then you have regarded it as (something) other than him. If you say that will is not (a thing) other than Him, then you have regarded it as Him.”

Sulaiman asked: “Does Allah know how He creates a thing?”

“Yes”, replied the Imam (‘a).

“Surely, this establishes a thing.”

The Imam (‘a) answered him with a wise answer, saying: “You have said something impossible. That is because man may know how to build a wall even if he does not build, know how to sew even though he does not sew, know how to make a thing well although he does not make it. The Imam (‘a) approached Sulaiman asking him: Does he know that He is One without anything with Him?”

“Yes”, was the answer.

"Does this establish anything?" As for Sulaiman, he denied what he said previously, saying: "He does not know that He is One without anything with Him."

"Do you know that?" asked the Imam ('a).

"Yes", came the answer.

"Therefore, You, Sulaiman, are more knowledgeable than Him!"

"The matter is impossible", declared Sulaiman.

The Imam ('a) asked him: "Is it impossible in your view that He is One without anything with Him, that He is All–hearing, All–seeing, All–wise, All–powerful...?"

"Yes", was the answer.

The Imam ('a) answered with a wise answer, saying: "How did He, the Great and Almighty, say that He was One, All–living, All–hearing, All–seeing, All–wise, All–powerful, All–knowing, All–aware, while He did not know that?! Aren't you accusing Him of lying? Exalted is Allah above that."

The Imam ('a) added: "How does He will to create that which He does not know how to create and what it is? If the creator does not know how to create a thing before he creates it, then he is perplexed. Exalted is Allah above that, a great exaltation!"

Sulaiman said at random: "Will is power."

The Imam ('a) replied: "He, the Great and Almighty, always has power over what He wills. There is no escape from that, for He, the Blessed and Exalted, said:

﴿وَلَئِن شِئْنَا لَنَذْهَبَنَّ بِالَّذِيٓ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ﴾

"And if We will, We should certainly take away that which we have revealed to you."[1]

If will is power, then His will to take it away, would be equal doing it,

1. *Surat Al-Isra', 17:86.*

because of His power."

Feebleness appeared on Sulaiman's face, and he stood perplexed before this ocean of knowledge and merit. As a result, he kept silent. Al-Ma'mun turned to him and praised the Imam's (‘a) talents saying: "Sulaiman, this is the most learned!" and in this way the discussion ended.[1]

10. The Imam's (‘a) discussion with Islamic Jurisprudents

A man in Khurasan claimed that Mu'awiyah was not one of the companions of God's Prophet (s). He swore that his wife would be illegal for him, if his claim turned out to be false. This happened while Al-Rida (‘a) was there. The local jurists had issued a decree stating that the man's wife was illegal for him. People asked Al-Rida (‘a) whether that man's wife was illegal for him or not. The Imam (‘a) replied, "No, she is not illegal." All the jurists wrote him a letter in which it was written, "O son of God'sProphet (‘a)! How and why do you consider her not to be illegal for him?" The Imam (‘a) wrote the following in a corner of their letter, "This is based on the tradition which you yourselves have narrated on the authority of Sa'id al-Khodri in which it is narrated that after the conquest of Makkah, God's Prophet (s) expressed that 'You are of the good ones, and my companions are of the good ones' to those who expressed submission to God and became Muslim when many of them had gathered around the Prophet (s). However, the Prophet (s) said, 'There will be no migration after victory.' Thus the Prophet (s)abolished migration after the victory of Makkah, and considered them (including Mu'awiyah) not to be his companions." When the jurists read the answer they changed their decree to that of Imam Al-Rida (‘a).[2]

3. The heritage of Imam al-Rida

The huge scientific wealth that Imam al-Rida (‘a) presented to the Muslim world and the world in general and the followers of the Ahlal-

1. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 1:159-168; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 10:329-338; **al-'Ihtijaj**, 2:178-184.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (‘a)**, 2:93-94; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 18:89-90.

Bayt (‘a) in particular, included great variety in such fields of knowledge and sciences as philosophy, theology, medicine, jurisprudence, *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis), history, pedagogy, arts, politics, and sociology.

Even though unintentionally, Al-Ma’mun, the ʿAbbasid ruler, furnished Imam al-Rida (‘a) with a golden opportunity to demonstrate his worth and come to the fore in the social field when the Imam (‘a) surpassed all scholars of the various religions and creeds, and scientists in different fields of knowledge that Al-Ma’mun had gathered for the purpose of finding fault with the Imam (‘a) and making him fall into disrepute in the field of knowledge or, more precisely, the highest knowledge.

Those scholars and scientists responded to Al-Ma’mun’s invitation and challenged Imam al-Rida (‘a) by posing the most ambiguous questions, trying to fulfil the desire of the ruler. In this regard, historians hold that more than twenty thousand questions in various fields of knowledge and sciences were posed to Imam al-Rida (‘a) who most skilfully answered all of them, challenging the despotism of Al-Ma’mun and the ʿAbbasid ruling authorities in general and demonstrating his excellence before all those who closed their eyes to the divinely gifted virtue and superiority of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).

Not counting these scholarly debates, a number of collections of traditions were reported from Imam al-Rida (‘a) by transmitters of traditions in general and biographers in particular. Examples of these collections are:

Tibb al-Imam al-Rida (Medicine of Imam al-Rida)

Also known as al-*risalah al-dhahabiyyah fil’tibb* (Golden Treatise on Medicine), this treatise was sent by Imam al-Rida (‘a) to Al-Ma’mun at the request of the latter. Quoted by al-Majlisi in *Bihar al-Anwar* 59:306–28, this treatise is published in an independent book and is currently available in bookstores.

Musnad al-Imam al-Rida (The Uninterruptedly Transmitted Traditions of Imam al-Rida (‘a)

Also known as *Sahifat al-Imam al-Rida* (Book of Imam al-Rida),

Sahifat Ahl al-Bayt (Book of the Ahl al-Bayt), and al-*Radawiyah*(Traditions of al-Rida), this treatise is found in different versions and it comprises traditions reported from Imam al-Rida (ʿa). Each version of this treatise, some of which have been published and are currently available in bookstores, differs from the others in the number of the reported traditions it comprises. This is why the treatise has had different titles. A version of the treatise has been reported by Dawud ibn Sulayman al-Ghazi and another version by ʿAbdullah ibn Ahmad ibn ʿAmir al-Ta'i, who reported it from his father. ʿAllamah al-Majlisi, in *Bihar al-Anwar* 10:366-9, has also referred to this treatise.

Jawamiʿ al-Shariʿah (Collectionsof the Religious Laws)

Reporting this treatise in ʿ*Uyun Akhbar al-Rida*(2/129), Shaykh al-Saduq gives it this title: Al-*Rida's Treatise to Al-Ma'mun on Fundaments of Islam and Laws of the Religion*.[1] As for Ibn Shuʿbah al-Harrani in *Tuhaf al-ʿUqul* (pp. 415), he presents this treatise under the title of: Imam al-Rida's Answers to Al-Ma'mun in relation to the Comprehensives of the Religious Laws.[2]

Fiqh al-Imam al-Rida (Jurisprudence of Imam al-Rida)

This book, which deals with Muslim jurisprudence, is also reported to have been written by Imam al-Rida (ʿa). Being one of the reference books depended on by ʿAllamah al-Majlisi in compiling his huge book of *Bihar al-Anwar*, the book has been published independently and is currently available in bookstores. Although the book is famously known to have been written by Imam al-Rida (ʿa), there is discrepancy among master scholars about the accuracy of its being ascribed to the Imam (ʿa).[3]

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1. Shaykh al-Saduq, **ʿUyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 2:129: (ma katabahu al-Rida lil-ma'mun fi mahd al-islam wa-shara'iʿ al-din).
2. Jawabuhu lilma'mun fi jawamiʿ al-shariʿah lamma sa'alahu jamʿa dhalika.
3. For further details, refer to the books involved in this issue. For instance, in his famous encyclopedic book of Aʿyan al-Shiʿah, Chapter: Imam al-

One of the famous traditions that was reported by Imam al-Rida (‘a) on the authority of his fathers, who reported it from the Holy Prophet (s), who reported it from the Archangel Gabriel, who reported it from Allah the Almighty, is the one famously known as al-*silsilah al-dhahabiyyah* (the Golden Chain of Authority).

This tradition reads, (The phrase of) *la ilaha illaallah* (meaning, there is no god save Allah) is My fortress. So, whoever utters it will be allowed to My fortress; and whoever enters My fortress will be saved from My chastisement.[1]

Commenting on the chain of authority of this tradition, Ahmad ibn Hanbal says, “If this chain of authority is recited before an ailing person, he will most surely be restored to health.”[2]

Shaykh ʿAzizullah al-ʿAtarudi has compiled approximately two thousand traditions of Imam al-Rida (‘a) that are written down in Dawud ibn Sulayman al-Ghazi’s book of *Musnad al-Imam al-Rida*. These traditions touch on a large variety of fields of knowledge. Although the book has been basically arranged according to the most important topics mentioned therein, which are namely principles of faith, jurisprudence, ethics, Qur'anic exegesis, history, and debates, the topics comprised by the book cannot be restricted to these fields of knowledge.

It is however noticeable that the book attaches priority to the topics of the principles of Islamic creed and laws, especially the issue of Imamah along with its innumerable details that have been given special attention as is obviously observed in Imam al-Rida’s (‘a)

Rida, Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin has written a section which he entitled: Mu'allafatuhu, meaning the books written by Imam al-Rida (‘a). In this section, he has listed these treatises along with a short introduction to each. See ***Aʿyan al-Shiʿah,*** *2*:26-7.

1. Refer to the details of this tradition in Al-Irbali, **Kashf al-Ghummah** by al-Irbali 3/101-2, al-Sawaʿiq al-Muhriqah by Ibn Hajar 2:595, and **Yanabiʿ al-Mawaddah** by al-Qanaduzi 3:122.

2. Ibn Shahr'ashub, **Manaqib Al Abi-Talib**, 3:422; al-Irbali, Al-Irbali, **Kashf al-Ghummah**, 3:100; Ibn Hajar, **al-Sawaʿiq al-Muhriqah**, 2:59.

words, [1] in which he embarked upon blocking all ways and outlets in the face of the other religions and sects that alienated the Ahl al-Bayt Sect in one way or another.

With regard to his famous debates with scholars of other religions and sects, Imam al-Rida's arguments have been excruciatingly frank in their content, since they are free of any sign of *taqiyah* (pious camouflage) or selectivity in demonstrating the historical facts. Moreover, the Imam ('a) burst into the field of sectarian debate laying full weight to it, while he had already borne in mind that he could await assassination because of the principles which he was upholding. He thus engaged himself courageously in that scholarly clash so as to confirm the truth of the sect he was representing, to provide the proofs and the justifications of its existence, to establish that the Ahl al-Bayt Sect was the one and only line that represented the message of God on earth and to ascertain that this line was only an extension of the Holy Prophet's (s) divine mission.

Let us now provide a few examples of Imamal-Rida's ('a) heritage in order to prove its richness and great variety that included many domains and fields of knowledge:

Intelligence, Knowledge, and Education

Imam al-Rida ('a) said:

1. Intelligence is a gift that God donates for free, while morality is obtained through exertion of effort. Thus, whoever exerts himself to

1. About five hundred traditions have been transmitted from Imam al-Rida ('a) in the field of Imamate alone, not to mention his debates on this topic and his other words mentioned in chapters on the divinely selection of the Holy Prophet (s) and Imams ('a), prophethood of the prophets, supplicatory prayers, and commentaries on and interpretations of Qur'anic verses, all of which are connected to the topic of Imamate. Accordingly, the topic of Imamate occupies such a very large place in Imam al-Rida's ('a) heritage that it is not inaccurate to say that one quarter of the Imam's ('a) heritage was dedicated to the Imamate.

obtain morality will eventually obtain it, but whoever exerts himself to obtain intelligence will obtain nothing but more ignorance.[1]

2. Worship is not to perform many prayers and observe much fasting; rather, true worship is to reflect on the affairs of Allah the Almighty and All–majestic.[2]

3. Whenever Allah decides to deposit intelligence with one of His servants, He will most surely use that intelligence one day to save that servant from a problem.[3]

The Holy Qur'an

1. Al-Hussain ibn Khalid is reported to have said: I once said to al-Rida ʿAli ibn Musa (‘a), “O son of Allah’s Apostle, please tell me about the Qur'an; whether it is creator or created.”

Answering me, the Imam (‘a) said,

“The Qur'an is neither creator nor created; rather, it is the words of Allah the Almighty and All–majestic.”[4]

2. Al-Rayyan ibn al-Salt is reported to have asked Imam al-Rida (‘a) about the Qur'an. the Imam (‘a) answered,

“The Qur'an is the words of Allah. You must never connive, nor must you ever seek true guidance elsewhere; lest you go astray.”[5]

3. Abu–Hayyun, the servant of Imam al-Rida (‘a), is reported to have quoted his master (‘a) as saying,

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1. Shaykh al-Kulayni, **al-Kafi**, 1:24, H. 18; **Tuhaf al-‘Uqul**, p. 448.
2. Shaykh al-Kulayni, **al-Kafi**, 2:55; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 68:322.
3. Shaykh al-Tusi, **al-Amali**, p. 55, H. 4 and al-Majlisi, **Bihar al-Anwar**, 1/88. According to **Nahj al-Balaghah**, 4:95, the same maxim is attributed to Imam ʿAli ibn Abi-Talib (‘a). It is also reported to have been said by the Holy Prophet (s), yet with little difference in the order of the statement. See al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, **Kanz al-ʿUmmal**, 10:173.
4. Shaykh al-Saduq, **al-Tawhid**, p. 223; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 89:117; **Amali**, Shaykh al-Saduq, p. 639.
5. Shaykh al-Saduq, **al-Tawhid**, p. 223; **Amali**, Shaykh al-Saduq, p. 639.

"Whoever tries to understand the allegorical words of the Qur'an according to its decisive words, will be led to a straight path."

The Imam ('a) then added,

"Surely, our reports have allegorical hints just like those of the Qur'an, and decisive hints just like those of the Qur'an, too. So, you should refer the allegorical to the decisive. Do not follow the allegorical separately from the decisive, lest you be led astray."[1]

4. While talking about the Holy Qur'an, Imam al-Rida ('a) glorified the proofs mentioned therein as well as its miraculous communication and composition. He thus said:

It (i.e. the Holy Qur'an) is Allah's strong cord, firmest handle, and most cherished tradition. It leads to paradise and saves from hellfire. It never wears out no matter how old it becomes and tongues never tire of reciting it. This is so because it has not been created for a certain age; rather, it has been made the proof and argument for all human beings. 'No falsehood shall come from it nor from behind it: a revelation from the All–Wise, the Most Praised One.'"[2]

Monotheism

1. When Imam al-Rida ('a) was asked for evidence to prove the creation of the universe, he answered saying:

"You had not existed, and then you existed, while you already know that it was not you who brought yourself to existence, nor was it one like you who brought you into existence."[3]

2. Once a man from the furthest site of Balkh (Transoxania) came to Imam Abu'l–Hasan al-Rida ('a) and said, 'I have a question for you. If your answer is the same as what I already know, I will accept you as my Imam (leader with Divine authority) ('a).'

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1. Shaykh al-Saduq, **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 2, p. 261; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 2:185: **al-'Ihtijaj**, 2:192.
2. **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 2:137-138; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 17:210-211.
3. Shaykh al-Saduq, **al-Tawhid**, p. 293; **'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 1:122-123; **al-'Ihtijaj**, 2:171.

Imam al-Rida (‘a) replied, ‘Ask whatever you wish.’

The man thus said, ‘Tell me when your Lord came into existence, how He was, and on which thing He depended’

Answering him, Imam al-Rida (‘a) said,

‘Verily, Allah the All–blessed and Almighty made the space without having had any space (i.e. He is not subject to the effects of any space). Similarly, He created all methods without having needed any method for Himself. He is Self–sufficient with His own power.’

The man stood up, kissed the head of the Imam (‘a), and declared, ‘I testify that there is no god save Allah; and Muhammad (s) is His apostle; and ʿAli is the successor toAllah’s Apostle (s) and the one divinely appointed for doing whatever Allah’s Apostle (s) had been ordered to do; and you (the Imams -as-) are verily the veracious leaders; and you (in person) are the successor to them.’[1]

3. Al-Hussain ibn Bashshar is reported to have said that he once asked Imam al-Rida (‘a) whether Allah already knew how the events that had not come to pass would have been if they had come to pass, or if He only knew how the events that would inevitably come to pass would be.

Answering him, Imam al-Rida (‘a) said:

“Verily, Allah the All–exalted knows about all things before their coming into existence.”[2]

4. Yunus ibn ʿAbd al-Rahman is reported to have said to Imam al-Rida (‘a), “It was reported to us that Allah is perfect knowledge that is free of any ignorance, perfect life that is free of any death, and perfect light that is free of any darkness. Is this true?”

The Imam (‘a) answered,

“Yes, it is. He is exactly such.”[3]

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1. Shaykh al-Kulayni, **al-Kafi**, 1:88; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 49:104-105.
2. Shaykh al-Saduq, **al-Tawhid**, p. 136; **ʿUyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 1:108;
3. **Al-Tawhid**, p. 138; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 4:84.

Prophethood and the Prophets

1. Ibn al-Sikkit is reported to have asked Imam al-Rida (‘a) why Allah the Almighty and All–exalted sent Moses (‘a) the son of ʿimran with the miracles of the rod turning into a serpent, the hand turning white, and the means of magic, sent the Jesus (‘a) with the miracles of medicine, and sent the prophet Muhammad (s) with speech and eloquence.

Answering him, Imam al-Rida (‘a) said:

“Indeed, when Allah the All–blessed and All–exalted sent Moses, the most popular practice for the people of that age was magic; therefore, Moses brought to them from Allah the Almighty and All–majestic the like of which they could not have as well as that which rendered their magic to no effect, confirming the argument against them.

Similarly, Allah the All–blessed and All–exalted sent Jesus in an age full of disease so the people needed medicine more than anything else. Therefore, Jesus brought to them from Allah the Almighty and All–majestic the like of which they did not have, that which restored to life their dead, and that which healed those born blind and the lepers, by the permission of Allah, confirming the argument of Allah against them.

Allah sent Muhammad (s) in an age when speech, eloquence *–and I believe that the Imam (‘a) mentioned poetry with them* – were common practice among the people. He therefore brought them the Book of Allah as well as the sermons and laws comprised therein that made their words of no effect and confirmed the argument of Allah against them.”

Astonished by Imam al-Rida’s (‘a) answer, Ibn al-Sikkit expressed, “I swear by Allah, I have never seen any one like you in these times. What is the argument of Allah against His creatures in the present day?”

Imam al-Rida (‘a) answered:

“The current argument of Allah against His creatures is intellect, by which one who tells the truth in what he conveys from Allah is recognized and thus given credence; and one who forges lies against Him is recognized and thus belied.”

Ibn al-Sikkit commented, "Yes, by Allah! This is the very answer."[1]

2. Imam al-Rida (ʻa) is reported to have said:

The *Ulul–'azm* apostles (i.e. apostles with inflexible constancy) were given this title because they came with complete codes of law and with perfect purposes. Each prophet (ʻa) who came after Noah followed the code of law, traced the path and book that were divinely revealed to Noah, up to the advent of Abraham, the friend of Allah.

Likewise, each prophet (ʻa) who existed in and after the age of Abraham followed the code of law, traced the path and book that was revealed to Abraham, up to the advent of Moses.

Each prophet (ʻa) who existed in and after the time of Moses followed the code of law, and traced the path and book that was revealed to Moses, up to the advent of Jesus.

Each prophet (ʻa) who existed in and after the age of Jesus followed the code of law, the traced–out way, and book that was revealed to Jesus, up to the advent of our Prophet Muhammad (s).

These five are the *ulul–'azm* apostles who are the best of all prophets and apostles of Allah.

As for the code of law brought by Muhammad (s), it shall never be repealed up to the day of resurrection, as there shall never come any prophet after the Prophet Muhammad (s) up to the day of resurrection. So, whoever claims to be a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) or claims to hold a divinely revealed book after the Qur'an, everyone who hears him claiming so may legally shed his blood."[2]

The Imamah and the Holy Imams

1.ʻAbd al-ʻAziz ibn Muslim is reported to have related the following:

On one of our first days in Khurasan, which was precisely Friday, we

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1. Shaykh al-Saduq, **ʻilal al-Shara'iʻ**, 11:21-2; **ʻUyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 2:86; **al-'Ihtijaj**, 2:224-225: **Bihar al-Anwar**, 11:70-71.
2. Shaykh al-Saduq, **ʻUyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 2:86-87; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 11:34-35; **ʻilal al-Shara'iʻ,** 1:122-123.

gathered in the Masjid of Marw where people, discussing the affairs of the Imamah, referred to the big variance of people's opinions in this regard. I therefore visited Imam al-Rida (‘a) and informed him of the question. He smiled and said to me:

O ʿAbd al-ʿAziz, people are indeed ignorant about religion and they are deceived by opinion. Allah the Almighty did not cause His Prophet (s) to die without perfecting religion. He revealed to him the Holy Qur'an in which there is the explanation of everything and the manifestation of what is lawful, unlawful, the doctrinal provisions, the rulings and everything that people might need. In this regard, He says:

﴿ مَّا فَرَّطۡنَا فِي ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ مِن شَيۡءٖ ﴾

“Nothing is left without a mention in the book.”[1]

During the farewell pilgrimage (i.e. the last ritual Hajj undertaken by the Holy Prophet (s), which took place during the last days of the Holy Prophet's lifetime) Allah the Almighty revealed to him a section of the Qur'an, saying:

﴿ ٱلۡيَوۡمَ أَكۡمَلۡتُ لَكُمۡ دِينَكُمۡ وَأَتۡمَمۡتُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ نِعۡمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلۡإِسۡلَٰمَ دِينٗا ﴾

“This day have I perfected your religion, completed My favours to you and have chosen Islam as a religion.”[2]

The Imamah is an inevitable part of the perfection of the religion. The Holy Prophet (s) did not depart from this world before he had manifest to the Muslim community all the points of their religion, showed them the right courses that they should take, placed them on the right path and assigned Imam ʿAli (‘a) as the next leader and Imam (‘a) for them. In fact, he did not leave anything without manifestation. Anyone who claims that Allah has not perfected His religion is denying the Holy Qur'an; and to deny the Holy Qur'an is a sort of atheism.

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1. *Surat al-Ana'am, 6:38.*
2. *Surat al-Maidah, 5: 3.*

Do people acknowledge the true standing of the Imamah and its position among the Muslim community so that they may be allowed to choose for themselves?

Allah the Almighty gave Prophet Abraham the Imamah as a third rank after prophethood and intimate friendship and as a virtue by which He conferred honour upon him and praised him. "When the Lord tested Abraham's faith, (by His words) and he satisfied the test, He said, 'I am appointing you as the Imam ('a) of mankind.' Abraham asked:

﴿ قَالَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِى ۖ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴾

"Will this Imamah also continue through my descendants?' The Lord replied, 'The unjust do not have the right to exercise My authority."[1]

Prophet Abraham ('a) was highly delighted with this rank; therefore, he hoped it would be passed to his descendants. This (Qur'anic) verse, however, cancels the Imamah of any unjust individual up to the day of resurrection and dedicates it as an exclusive right to the divinely chosen. Then Allah the Almighty honoured the Imamah when He decided it to be for the offspring of the immaculate ones. He says:

﴿وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُۥٓ إِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ نَافِلَةً ۖ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا صَٰلِحِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَجَعَلْنَٰهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ ٱلْخَيْرَٰتِ وَإِقَامَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ وَإِيتَآءَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةِ ۖ وَكَانُوا۟ لَنَا عَٰبِدِينَ ﴾

"We granted him (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob as a gift and helped both of them to become righteous people. We appointed them as Imams ('a) to guide people through our command and sent them revelation to strive for good deeds, worship their Lord and pay the religious tax. Both of them were our worshipping servants."[2]

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1. *Surat Al-Baqara, 2:124.*
2. *Surat Al-Anbia', 21:72-73.*

Successive generations continued to receive the Imamah in inheritance until it reached Prophet Muhammad (s). In this regard, Allah the Almighty says:

﴿إِنَّ أَوْلَى ٱلنَّاسِ بِإِبْرَٰهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَٰذَا ٱلنَّبِيُّ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ وَلِيُّ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

"The nearest people to Abraham, among mankind, are those who followed him, this Prophet (Muhammad) (s) and the true believers."[1]

In this manner, the Imamah has become exclusive to them. Then the Holy Prophet (s) gave it to Imam ʿAli ('a) to be successive in his divinely chosen offspring upon whom Allah conferred knowledge and faith. This is indicated by Allah the Almighty's saying:

﴿وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلْعِلْمَ وَٱلْإِيمَٰنَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي كِتَٰبِ ٱللَّهِ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ ٱلْبَعْثِ﴾

"Those who have received knowledge and have faith will say, 'By the decree of Allah, you have remained for the exact period which was mentioned in the Book of Allah the Almighty about the day of resurrection. This is the day of resurrection, but you did not know."[2]

This verse shows the decree of Allah the Almighty regarding the question of Imamah that will persist in the Holy Prophet's (s) progeny until the day of resurrection, since no prophet should come after Muhammad (s).

After all, how can those ignorant people choose for the Imamah out of their personal opinions?

The Imamah is for the rank of the prophets ('a) and the heritage of their successors.

1. *Surat Al-Imran, 3:68.*
2. *Suratal-Rum, 30:56.*

The Imamah is the representation of Allah the Almighty and His Apostle (Muhammad) (s), the position of Amir al-Mu'minin (ʻAli) and the inheritance of al-Hasan and al-Hussain (ʻa).

The Imam (ʻa) is the head of religious affairs and the system of Muslims, the source of setting worldly affairs right, and the stronghold of the believers.

The Imamah is the rising principal of Islam and its supreme branch.

The accomplishment of the prayers, zakat, fasting, Hajj, jihad, the availability of spoils and alms, the execution of the religious provisions and laws, and the protection of the fronts and the borders—all these are achieved only through the Imam (ʻa).

The Imam (ʻa) legalizes whatever Allah has deemed legal, forbids whatever Allah the Almighty has deemed illegal, executes the religious punishments that Allah the Almighty has enacted, protects the religion of Allah the Almighty and calls to His path through wisdom, good advice and overwhelming evidence.

The Imam (ʻa) is equal to the shining sun whose light covers the whole world while it stands upright in the horizon and neither sight nor hands can catch hold of.

The Imam (ʻa) is the luminous full moon, the bright lamp, the rising light, the guiding star in the deep–black gloom, in the murk of derelict lands and deserts, and in the waves of oceans.

The Imam (ʻa) is fresh water to the thirsty, guide to those who seek guidance, and the saviour from perdition.

The Imam (ʻa) is the guiding beacon on the highlands, the source of heat to the seekers of warmth and the rescuer from dangers. Whoever departs from the Imam (ʻa) will surely perish.

The Imam (ʻa) is the rainclouds, the torrential downpour, the shining sun, the shady sky, the plains, the abundant spring, the brook, and the garden.

The Imam (ʻa) is the lenient custodian, the clement father, the tender brother, the like of the sympathetic mother to her baby and the shelter of the servants when they are stricken by astounding calamities.

The Imam (‘a) is the trustee of Allah amongst His creatures, the argument of Allah against His servants, the successor toAllah in His countries, the caller to Allah, and the protector of the sanctities of Allah.

The Imams (‘a) are those purified from sins, those freed from defects, those exclusively endowed with knowledge, those characterized with forbearance, the system of the religion, the stronghold of the Muslims, punishment for the hypocrites, and perdition for the disbelievers.[1]

2. Al-Hussian ibn Khalid reported Imam Abu’l–Hassan ʿAli ibn Musa al-Rida (‘a) to have quoted his father relating his forefathers who quoted the Holy Prophet (s) as saying:

“Whoever wishes to embark in the ark of salvation, hang on to the firmest handle, and hold fast by the strong cord of Allah, should take ʿAli as his leader after my departure, should act hostilely towards his enemies, and should accept as leaders the guiding Imams (‘a) from his offspring. They are verily my successors and trustees and they are the arguments of Allah against the creatures after me, the chiefs of my community, and the guides of the pious to Paradise. Their party is my party, and my party is the party of Allah, while the party of their enemies is the party of Satan.”[2]

3. Imam al-Rida (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (s) as addressing Imam ʿAli (‘a) with these words:

“O ʿAli, you are my brother, my aid, the bearer of my standard in this world and in the next world, and the guardian of my (divine) pool. Whoever loves you has in fact loved me; but whoever hates you has in fact hated me.”[3]

Ghadìr Day

Imam al-Rida (‘a) is reported to have said the following words about

1. Refer to the rest of the Imam’s discourse in **al-Kafi**, 1:189-203.
2. Shaykh al-Saduq, **al-Amali**, p. 70; Shaykh al-Saduq, **ʿUyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 1:262; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 23:144.
3. Shaykh al-Saduq, **al-Amali**, p. 116; **ʿUyun Akhbar al-Rida**, 1:264; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 8:19.

Ghadir Day:

Ghadir Day is the day of congratulations. On this day, you may congratulate each other. When a believer meets one of his brethren–in–faith, he may say to him, 'All praise be to Allah Who has decided us to be of those who adhere firmly to the (divinely commissioned) leadership of the commander of the believers and the Holy Imams ('a).'

It is also the day of smiling in the faces of believers; so, if one smiles in the face of one's brother–in–faith on Ghadir Day, Almighty Allah will look at him on the day of resurrection with mercy, fulfill one thousand of his needs, allocate a palace in paradise to be his, and make his face bright.

It is also the day of festival; hence, if one celebrates Ghadir Day, Almighty Allah shall forgive all sins, be they grand or insignificant, and shall commission angels to record rewards and ranks for him up to Ghadir Day in the subsequent year. If he dies during that period, he will be considered a martyr, and if he lives, he will spend his lifetime in happiness. Similarly, he who provides food to a believer on that day will be granted the reward of one who has offered food to all of the prophets ('a) and the veracious ones; and if one visits a believer on that day, Almighty Allah shall allocate seventy lights to light up his grave, expand it for him, and commission seventy thousand angels to visit him in his grave each day to bear him the good tidings of being allowed into paradise.

On Ghadir Day too, Almighty Allah offered the divinely commissioned leadership (*wilayah*) of Imam ʿAli and the Holy Imams ('a) to the inhabitants of the seven skies. The inhabitants of the seventh sky preceded the others in accepting it; therefore, Almighty Allah ornamented it with the divine throne. Then came the inhabitants of the fourth sky; so, Almighty Allah ornamented it with the much–frequented house, the Bayt ul Ma'mur the symbolic copy of the Divine House of God (in Makkah) for the angels to circumambulate in

heaven[1]. Then came the inhabitants of the lowest sky, and Almighty Allah ornamented it with the stars.

He then offered the leadership to the lands of the earth. Makkah preceded all other lands in accepting this leadership; Almighty Allah therefore ornamented it with the holy house (Kaʿbah). Then came the city of al-Madinah; so, Almighty Allah ornamented it with the divinely chosen prophet Muhammad (s). Then came the city of al-Kufah; Almighty Allah ornamented it with the commander of the believers (Imam ʿAli-as-).

Almighty Allah then offered the leadership to the mountains. The first to respond were three mountains; the mountain of agate, the mountain of turquoise, and the mountain of corundum; therefore, these three mountains became the best of all mountains and these metals became the best of jewels. As other mountains joined these three in accepting the leadership, Almighty Allah made them carry metals like gold and silver. As for the mountains that rejected the leadership, they became barren; growing no plants.[2]

Imam al-Rida (ʻa) and Jurisprudence

The jurisprudential heritage of Imam al-Rida (ʻa) is embodied by the texts on religious laws and legislation that reached us from him through uninterruptedly transmitted narrations.

As for his narrations on the laws of devotional acts like ceremonial purity, ritual prayer, fasting, zakat, Hajj, and pilgrimage to the tombs of the holy saints, they amount to approximately 437 texts.

162 texts have been reported from Imam al-Rida (ʻa) on the laws of matrimony and divorce.

About 255 texts have been reported from him on such miscellaneous topics as sustenance, hunting, food and drink.

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1. There is a certain discrepancy here with various other narrations, some of which mention that The Bayt al-Maʼmur is in the Seventh Heaven.
2. Sayid Ibn Tawus, **Iqbal al-Aʿmal,** 2:262; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 27:262.

82 narrations have been reported from him on laws of self–adornment and luxury.

12 texts have been reported concerning the laws of jihad.

As for the laws of religious punishments, blood–money, judicial affairs, and testimony, about 39 texts have been reported from him, while 62 texts reported from him deal with the laws of oaths, vows, legacies, funeral ceremonies, and inheritance.

These texts amount to about 1049 narrations in all. Of course, this large number forms more than the half of the total number of the texts reported from Imam al-Rida (‘a). When all the narrations that are reported from Imam al-Rida (‘a) and are currently available are added together, they amount to 2033 texts.

This is a clear–cut indication of the great attention that Imam al-Rida (‘a) paid to the laws, rules, and principles of the Ahl al-Bayt jurisprudential school.[1]

Maxims of Imam al-Rida (‘a)

1. A person cannot be a true believer before he enjoys three qualities; one from his Lord, one from the Prophet (s), and one from the Imam (‘a). The quality that he should learn from his Lord is to conceal the secrets, the quality that he should learn from the Prophet (‘a) is to behave courteously towards people, and the quality that he should learn from the Imam (‘a) is to act steadfastly in poverty and distress.[2]

2. The wealthy are required to be generous to their family members.[3]

3. Cleaning is an ethos of the prophets (‘a).[4]

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1. For further details, refer to Shaykh ʿAzizullah al-ʿAtarudi’s Musnad al-Imam al-Rida, the second volume of which is dedicated to presenting Imam al-Rida’s texts on the aforesaid topics of Muslim jurisprudence.
2. Ibn Shuʿbah al-Harrani, **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 442; Shaykh al-Saduq, **al-Amali**, p. 408; **al-Kafi**, 2:241-242.
3. **Al-Kafi**, 4:11; **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 442.
4. **Al-Kafi**, 5:567; **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 442.

4. The trustworthy has not betrayed you; you put your trust in the betrayer.[1]

5. When Allah wills an action, He seizes the intellects of His servants, gives effect to that action perfectly, and has His will achieved. Then He returns their intellects to them. Therefore, they wonder how and when such an action took place.[2]

6. Silence is one of the doors to wisdom. It yields amicability and leads to every item of goodness.[3]

7. To endear yourself to people is half of intelligence.[4]

8. Verily, Allah hates gossip, squandering, and excessive begging.[5]

9. Imam al-Rida (‘a) was once asked to define the most favourite servants of God. He answered thus:

“The best servants of Allah are those who feel delighted whenever they do a good deed, hurry to implore Allah’s forgiveness whenever they commit an offence, thank Allah whenever they obtain something, behave steadfastly whenever a misfortune befalls them, and pardon whenever they are enraged.”[6]

10. As Imam al-Rida (‘a) was asked about the limit to trusting in God; he answered:

The limit to trusting in God is to fear nobody except Him.[7]

11. To invite people and serve them with food at wedding ceremonies is a recommended tradition.[8]

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1. **Al-Kafi**, 75:335; **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 442.
2. **Al-Kafi**, 2:113; **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 442;***al-Khisal***, p. 158.
3. **Al-Kafi**, 2:643; **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 443.
4. **Al-Kafi**, 5:301; **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 443.
5. **Al-Kafi**, 2:240; **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 445; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 75:338.
6. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 75:338; **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 445; al-Saduq, **al-Amali**, p. 311.
7. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 75:338; **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 445; al-Saduq, **al-Amali**, p. 311**.**
8. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 75:338; **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 445.

12. True faith stands on four supports: putting trust in God, satisfaction with His acts, submission to His commandments, and entrusting Him with all affairs. The virtuous servant – the believer from the family of Pharaoh–said (as the Qur'an relates): "I entrust God with my affairs. God is Well Aware of His servants.

﴿ وَأُفَوِّضُ أَمۡرِيٓ إِلَى ٱللَّهِۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بَصِيرُۢ بِٱلۡعِبَادِ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَوَقَىٰهُ ٱللَّهُ سَيِّـَٔاتِ مَا مَكَرُواْ ﴾[1]

So, God protected him against their evil plans.[2]

13. Build good relations with your relatives through any act, even if it be as insignificant as giving them a drink of water. The best act of regarding good relations with one's relatives is to stop annoying them. The Book of Allah reads, "Render not your charities worthless by obligation and injury laid on them. (2:264)"[3]

14. Forbearance and knowledge are within the signs of understanding. Silence is one of the doors to wisdom. It yields amicability and leads to every item of goodness.[4]

15. Verily, the reward of one who seeks earnings for no other purpose than meeting the needs of his dependents is greater than the reward of one who fights for God's sake.[5]

16. Imam al-Rida ('a) was once greeted with the morning greeting: "How is your morning today?" and he answered:

I begin my day with a lifetime that is incessantly reduced and with deeds that are registered against me. Death is inevitable for us, Hell is behind us, and we do not know what will happen to us.[6]

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1. *Surat Ghafir, 40:44-45.*
2. **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 445.
3. **Bihar al-Anwar**, 75:338; **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 445.
4. **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 445; **al-Kafi**, 2:113; **al-khisal**, p. 158.
5. **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 445; **al-Kafi**, 5:88.
6. **Tuhaf al-ʿUqul**, p. 446; **Bihar al-Anwar**, 75:339.

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2.Ithbat al-Huda, Muhammadbin al-Hassan al-Hurr al-'Amili, , Abu Talib al-Tajlili al-Tabrizi, al-Matba'ah al-'Ilmiyyah, Qum, Iran.

3. Iqbal al-'Amal, Ali ibn Musa Bin Tawos, By Jawad Al-Qayumi al-Isfahani, Publication of Maktab al-A'lam al-Islami, Qum, Iran, First edition.

4. Al-Ithaf fi hub al-Ashraf, by Jamal al-Din Abi Muhammad Abdullah ibn Amir al-Bishrawi, who died (1171 AH).

5. Al-Ihtijjaj 'ala Ahl–al l'ujaj, by Abu Mansour Ahmad ibn Ali Abi–Talib, who died (560 AH), Dar al-N'aman, al-Najaf, (1386 AH).

6. Al-'Ikhtisas, by Shaykh al-Mufid, Dar al-Mufid, Beirut, second edition (1414 AH).

7. Al-Irshad, by al-Shaykh al-Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammadal–Nu'man al-Akbri al-Baghdadi, who died (423 AH), Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut.

8. Al-Istibsar, Muhammadbin al-Hassan al-Tusi, By Hassan al-Kharsan, publication of Dar al-Kotob al-Islamia, Tehran, Iran, 4th edition.

9.'Ilal al-Shari'a, Muhammadbin Ali ibn Al-Hussain ibn Babawayh, (al-Shaykh al-–Saduq), who died (381h.), Al-Maktabah al-Hidariah, 1st edition, al-Najaf al-Ashraf.

10. Al-Iqid al-Farid, Ahmadbin Muhammad ibn Abid–Rabah al-Andulosi, by Dr. Adbul–Majidal–Tarhini, Dar al-kotobal–'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st eadition.

11.'Iqdal-Durarr fi Akhbar al-Montadhar, Yusuf ibn Yahyabin Ali al-maqdisi al-Shafi'i al-Salami, Dar al-kotobal–'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st edition.

J

1.Jami' al-Ruwat, Muhammadbin Ali al-Ardabili al-Gharawi al-Hairi.

2. Jam'a Karamat al-Awlia, Yusuf ibn Ism'ail al-Nabhani, by Ibrahim 'Atwa 'Awad, Dar al-M'arifah, Beriut, Lebanon.

3.Jawahir al-'Iqdain fi Fadai'l al-Sharafayn, Ali ibn Abdullah al-Samhodi, by Dr. Musa banayal-'Alili, al-'Ani printing house, Baghdad, Iraq.

K

1. Al-khar'ij wa al-Jara'ih, Abu al-Hussain sa'ad ibn Abdullah al-Rawandi, who is known as Qotb al-Din al-Rawandi, who died (573H).

2. Al-Khisal, by Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali al-Saduq, who died (381H), published by Jam'at al-Mudarrisin, Qum.

3.Khulasat al-Aqwal fi Ma'rifat al-Rijal, al-Hassan ibn Yusuf al-Motahar al-Hilli, By Jawad al-Qayumi, Publication of Mosasatmushir al-faqaha, Iran.

4. Khulasat Tahthib–Tahthib al-kamal, by Safi al-Din Ahmad ibn Abdullah al-khazraji, who died (991H), forth edition (1141H).

5. Al- Kafi, by Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qubial–Kulayni, al-Razi, who died (328 or 329H), Dar al-kutob al-islamiah, Tehran 5th edition (1363H).

6. Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, by Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul–karim al-Shaybani (Ibn al-Athir al-jazari), who died (630H), Dar al-Sadir, Bireut.

7. Kitab al-'Ain, Abu Al-Rahman al-Khalil al-Farahidi, By Dr. Mahdi Ibrahim al-Samirai, Mosasat Dar al-hijrah, 2nd edition.

8. Kashf al –Ghummah fi Ma'arifat al-Aaimah, by 'Ali ibn 'Isa al-Ardabily, who died (692AH), Dar al-Adwaa 2nd edition, Beirut.

9. Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah, by Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn al-Hussain al-Shaykh al-Saduq, who died (381AH), Muasasat al-Nashr al –Islami first edition (1405AH).

L

Lisan al-Arab, Abu al-fadhl Muhammadbin Makram ibn Mandhor al-Ifriqi al-Masri, Dar Ihia al-Turath al-Arabi, 1st edition.

M

1. Al-Mahasin, by Abu Ja'far Ahmad ibn Khalid al-Barqi, who died (274 or 280 AH), Dar al-kotob al-Islamiyyah, Tehran.

2. Al-Musannaf, by Abdullah ibn Abi Shaibah Ibrahim ibn Uthman al-Kufi al-Absi, who died (235 AH).

3. Al-Maqn'ah, by al-Shaykh al-Mufid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Nu'man al-Akbari, who died (413 AH). Mosasatal–nashr al-islami.

4. Al- Manaqib, al-Muwafaq ibn Ahmadbin Muhammadal–Maki al-Kharazmi, By Malik al-mahmodi, Mosasatsayid al-Shuhada', publication of Mosasatal–Nashr, Qum, Iran, 2nd edtion.

5. Mir'at al-Jinan wa 'Abrat al-Yaqadhan, As'ad ibn Ali ibn Sulaiman al-Yafi'i al-Yamani al-Makki, dar al-kotob al-'Ilmiyyah, Beriut, Lebanon, 1st edition.

6. Mathir al-Anaqah fi Ritbah al-Khilafah, Abu al-'Abbas al-Qalqashandi, Abdul–sattar Ahmad , 'Alam al-kotob, Beriut, Lebanon.

7. Mouroj al-Thahab, Ali ibn al-Hussain al-Masudi, By amir Mahana, Publication of Mosasatal–'Alami, Beriut, Lebanon, first edition.

8. Mosnad al-Imam al-Rida ('a), By Aziz–allah al-'Atarudi, Dar al-Safwa, Beriut, Lebanon, 2nd edition.

9.Mishkat al-Anwar fi Ghorar al-Akhbar, Abu al-Fadil Ali ibn Hassan al-Tusi, By Mahdi Houshmand, Publication of Dar al-Hadith, Iran, first edition.

10. Matalib al-Su'ul fi Manaqib Al al-Rasul, by Muhammad ibn Talha al-Shafi'i, who died (654 AH), by Ahmad al-'Atiyyah.

11. Mu'jam Rijal al-hadith, abu al-Qasim al-Mousawi al-Kho'i, 5th edition.

12. Maqatil al-Talibin, by Abu al-Faraj Ali ibn al-Hussain Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Amawi al-Isfahani, who died (356 AH), al-Maktabah al-Haydariah, al-Najaf, second edition (1385 AH).

13. Maqtal al-Hussain, by Sayid Abdul–Razzaq ibn Muhammad al-Muqarram al-Najafi, who died (1391 AH).

14. Makarim al-Akhlaq, al-Hassan ibn al-Fadhil al-Tabrasi, Publication of al-Sharif al-Radi, Qum, Iran, 6th edition.

15. Manaqib Al–AbiTalib, by Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Shahr Ashub al-Seruwi al-Mazandarani, who died (588 AH), al-Matba'ah al-Haydariah, al-Najaf al-Ashraf (1414 AH).

16. Manaqib Ali bin–AbiTalib, Ali ibn Muhammadbin shahr Ashub, Publication of Maktabat al-Haydariah, al-Najaf, Iraq.

17. Mohaj al-D'awat wa manhaj al-'Ibadat, Ali ibn Musa ibn Tawus, Publications Of Mosasatal–'Alami, Beirut, Lebanon, 2nd edition.

N

1. Nathr al-Durar, by Abu Sa'id Mansor ibn Hassan al-Abi, who died (481 AH).

2. Al-Nojom al-zahirah fi Moluk masr wa al-Qahira, Yusuf ibn Taghri al-qahiri al-Najafi, Publication of Mosasatal–masriah al-'Amah.

3. Nuzhat al-Nadhir fi Jam'a bain al-Ashbah wa al-Nadhair, Mo'umin ibn Hassan Mo'umin al-Shabalanji, Publication of Dar al-Kotob al-'Almah, Beirut, Lebanon, first edition.

4. Nihayat al-Irab fi Ma'arifat Ansab al-Arab, Mubarak ibn Mubarak al-Jazari, Ibn al-Athir, who died (606 AH).

Q

1. Al-Qamus al-Muhit, by Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Fayrozabadi, who died (816 or 817 AH).

2. Qurb al-Isnad, by Abu al 'Abbas Abdullah ibn Ja'far al-Himiari (a third century scientist).

R

1. Rijal al-Tusi, Abu Ja'far Muhammadbin al-Hassan al-Tusi, who died (460H), Mu'sasat al-Nashr al-Islami, Qum, Iran.

2. Rijal al-Kashi (*ikhtiar ma'rifat al-rijal),* by Abu Ja'far Muhammad al-Hassan al-Tusi, who died (460 AH).

3. Rijal al-Najashi, Abu al-Abas Ahmadbin Ali al-Najashi al-Asadi al-Kufi, who died (450H) Mu'sasat al-Nashr al-Islami, Qum, Iran, 5th edition.

4. Rabi'a al-Abrar, Jar–Allah Mahoud ibn Umar al-Zamakhshari, By Salim al-No'aimi, Dar al-thakhair, Qum, Iran, 1st edition.

S

1. Al-Sarair, MuhammadMansour ibn Ahmadbin Idris al-Hilli, Mosasatal–Nashir al-Islami, Qum, Iran, 4th edition.

2. Sunan Ibn Majah, by Muhammad ibn Yazid ibn Majah, who died (275 AH), Dar Alfikr.

3. Sunan Abi Dawud, by Sulaiman ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sajistani, who died (275 AH), by sa'id Muhammadal–Laham, dar al-Fiker, 1st edition.

4. Sirat A'lam al-Nubala', by Abi Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Thahabi, who died (748 AH), 9th edition (1413 AH), Mo'asasat al-Risalah.

5. Al-Sirah al-Nabawiah, Isma'il ibn Kathir, by Moustafa Abdull–Wahid, Publications of Dar al-M'arifa, Beirut, Lebanon.

6. Al-Sirah al-Nabawiah, Abdull–Malik ibn Hisham ibn Ayoub al-Himiari, by MuhammadMohiy al-Din Abdull–Hamid, Publications of Matba'at Madani, Qairo, Egypt.

7. Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim 'Ila Mostahiqi, by Ali ibn Younis al-Nabati al-Biadi al-'Amili, who died (877 AH).

8. Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, ibn Abi Hajar al-Haythami al-Makki, who died (974h.), Maktabat al-Qahira

T

1. Al-Tahrir al-Taousi, Hassan ibn Zaid al-Din, By Fadil al-jawahiri, Publication of Maktab Ayat Allah Mar'ashi al-Najafi, Qum, Iran, First edition.

2. Al-Tawhid, by Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Saduq, who died (381H). By Hashim al-Hussaini al-Tehrani, Qum, Iran.

3. Tarikh ibn Khaldon, Abdul–Rahman ibn Muhammad, ibn Khaldon, Publication of Dar Ihia' al-Turath, Beirut, Lebanon, 4th edition.

4. Tarikh al-Islam, Muhammadbin Uthman al-Thahabi, By Dr. Umar abdul–Salam, Publication of Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, First edition.

5. Tarikh al-Khulafa', by Jalal al-Din Abdul–Rahman al-Suyuti, who died (911 AH).

6. Tarikh al-Tabari (Tarikh al-Umam wal Moluk), by Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (310 AH), Mo'asasat al-'Alami–Beirut (1403 AH).

7. Tarikh al-Ya'qubi, by Ahmad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ja'far ibn Wahab ibn Wadieh al-ya'qubi, who died (284 AH). Dar Sadir, Beirut.

8. Tarikh Dimashq, by Abu al-Qasim Ali ibn al-Hassan ibn Hibat–Allah al-Shafi'i, who is known as ibn 'Asakir. He died on (571 AH), Dar al-fikr first edition, Beirut.

9. Tarikh Baghdad, Ahmadbin Ali al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, by Mustafa abdul–Qadir 'Ata, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, First edition.

10. Tuhaf al-'Uqul, by Abi Muhammad al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Shu'bah al-Harrani, Mo'asasat al-Nashr, second edition (1404 AH).

11. Tathkirt al-Khawas, by Abi al-Mudhaffar Yusuif ibn Qazawighli ibn Abdullah Sebt ibn al-Jawzi, who died (654 AH).

12. Tahthib al-Ahkam, by Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Tusi, who died (460 AH), Dar al-Kitab al-Islamiyyah –Tehran, third edition (1364 AH).

13. Tahthib al-Tahthib, Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, who died (852 AH). Publication of Dar al-Fikr, Beriut, Lebanon, First ediotion.

14.Tahthib al-Kamal fi Asma' al-Rijal, by Jamal al-Din ibn al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf al-Mazi, who died (742 AH), Mo'asasat al-Risalah, fourth edition, Beirut (1406 AH).

15. Al-Thaqib fi al-Manaqib, Muhammadbin Ali al-Tusi, By Nabil 'Alwan, Publication of Mouasast Ansarian, Qum, Iran, second edition.

16. Al-Thuqat, Muhammadbin Haban al-Basti, who died (354HA), India, first edition.

17.Thawb al-Nadhar fi sharih al-Thar, Ja'far ibn Muhammad(ibn Ni'ma al-Hilli), by Faris Hasson Karim, Mosasatal–Nashr al-Islami, Qum, Iran, first edition.

18. Thail Tarikh Baghadad, Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Mahmud ibn al-Hussain (Ibn al-najar), who died (643 AH).

19. Tara'if fi Ma'rifat mathahib al-Tawa'if, Ali ibn Musa ibn Taus al-Hilli, Matb'ah al-khayyam, Qum, Iran.

U

1.'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida ('a), Abu Ja'far Muhammadbin Ali al-Saduq, who died (381h.).

2. Usul al-kafi, Abu Ja'far Muhammadbin Y'aqub al-Kulayni, died (328 or 32Th.).

W

1. Al-Wafi bil Wafiyat, Salah al-Din abu Safa khalil ibn aybak ibn Abdullah al-Safadi al-Shafi'a, who died (764H).

2.Wafiyat al-Ayaan, by Abi al-'Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Barmaki, known as Ibn Khalkan, who died (681 AH), by Ehsan Abbas, Publication of Dar al-Thaqafah, Beirut, Lebanon.

Y

1.Yanabi' al-Mawadah, by Sulaiman ibn Ibrahim al-Qunduzi, who died (1294 AH), Dar al-'Uswah, 1st edition.

2. Al-Yaqin bi Ikhtisas Mawlana Ali bi Imrah al-Mo'uminin, Ali ibn Moussa ibn Taus, by, Al-Ansari, Mosasat Dar Al-Kitab, Iran, 1st edition.